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Jordan Times, Tuesday, May 28, 1996

Is oil-for-food deal beginning of end to Iraq sanctions?

By Carol Giacomo
Reuters

WASHINGTON — Iraq is hailing a recent U.N. oil-for-food deal as the beginning of the end of tough international sanctions.

However, some American experts believe the deal could ensure that sanctions on Baghdad remain in place indefinitely, as the United States insists.

The agreement permits Iraq to sell up to \$2 billion worth of oil over six months under stringent U.N. supervision, with most of the proceeds going to buy food and medicine.

Before the accord was reached in New York last week, Washington was under pressure to relax the stranglehold of U.N. sanctions imposed in 1990 after Iraq invaded Kuwait.

Leader of the coalition that waged the Gulf war against Baghdad, the United States has been a primary enforcer of Iraq's post-war penance, insisting the

Arab state comply strictly with U.N. demands, including destruction of all of its nuclear, chemical and biological weapons.

U.S. officials long ago learned not to trust Iraqi President Saddam Hussein. Some countries, such as France and Russia, argued for some relief from sanctions last year but Baghdad lost support after revelations about the extent to which it had lied again about its weapons programmes.

Still pressure continued to build — in foreign capitals and among humanitarian groups — for relieving the suffering endured by the Iraqi people over the past six years.

Malnutrition is a problem and there is a critical need for medical supplies. The country's infrastructure is also ruined.

The United States accused President Saddam of ruthlessly allowing his people to suffer while he used available resources for palaces and other luxuries. But this charge was increasingly

being drowned out by fears of a humanitarian disaster in Iraq.

"Iraq since mid-1991 fought the oil-for-food deal, a temporary measure subject to regular U.N. Security Council scrutiny — as an infringement on Iraq's sovereignty."

U.S. Officials say it finally agreed out of desperation because he did not see any near-term possibility of having the broader sanctions lifted and being able to sell oil in unrestricted quantities.

"Because he accepted the deal, Saddam has significantly weakened the humanitarian argument for lifting sanctions," a senior U.S. official told Reuters. Several private experts concurred. "This takes away his humanitarian card," one said.

Even if the push for a complete lifting of the sanctions revived, Washington would resist. In addition to proving all weapons of mass destruction are destroyed, U.S. Officials insist President Saddam must also comply with

other demands, like accounting for 600 Kuwaitis missing after the 1990 invasion.

But no country has proposed lifting sanctions before U.N. weapons inspectors certify Iraq has complied with disarmament demands.

The United States initially hoped the sanctions would help force President Saddam from power. But it now seems resigned to the status quo as long as he remains tightly constrained.

Moreover, senior U.S. officials are convinced that the U.N. official charged with monitoring Iraq's weapons programme, Rolf Ekens, is far from certifying Iraq as in compliance.

The oil-for-food deal will free up other funds for Iraq to use for its military purposes and it may even siphon off some of the new oil profits for this purpose too, they say.

But while Iraq says this deal is the "first step to lifting sanctions, it may be the last step. Saddam

might be stuck with this highly restrictive programme for some time," one government analyst said.

Administration supporters of the deal say the restrictions are so tight that Iraq will have little room to manoeuvre.

But Christine Helms, an oil and gas consultant, says "once the oil starts to flow, it will be very difficult to stop it."

This is partly because the Security Council is not going to want to act for long like "the 13th member of OPEC (Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries)" and exercise control over world oil prices by meeting every six months to approve a new sale of Iraqi oil, she said in an interview.

Also, the administration is not going to want to again shut off an economic boon to Turkey whose pipeline will be used to ship the oil, she added.

Iran's parliament makes way for new assembly

TEHRAN (AP) — The leader of Iran's outgoing parliament said Sunday that he was proud of the assembly's record against the United States and Israel.

In its last session the 270-seat assembly approved huge pay raises of between 35 per cent and 185 per cent for the armed forces, which are up to 600,000 strong.

But that move may have been largely symbolic, because the bill still has to be approved by a parliamentary watchdog committee before becoming law.

However, the parliament called for the pay raises days after Iran's supreme leader, Ayatollah Ali

Khamenei, called for a more powerful army to confront the Islamic republic's main enemies — Israel and the United States.

In a closing speech Ali Akbar Nateq-Nouri, the outgoing parliament speaker, said policies adopted by the Majlis, or parliament, had been "very effective and positive in combating the United States and the Zionist regime."

The Majlis has vetoed any suggestion of better ties with the United States. It has also staunchly stuck to the Iranian government's standard line that the Jewish state must be destroyed.

The hardliners have dominated parliament for years, but in spring elections they lost ground to moderate technocrats. They want to ease strict Islamic social strictures and pursue a pragmatic foreign policy that includes seeking foreign investment.

Some of the technocrats have spoken of improving ties with the United States, thus angering the staunchly anti-American hardliners, who say that would spell the end of their 1979 Islamic revolution.

The moderates, led by the President Ali Hashemi Rafsanjani, are believed to have the upper hand in the new Majlis, which will convene June 1.

But the true colours of the

new Majlis will only be known during the crucial vote for a new speaker, who will be elected before the inauguration. The Majlis could vote either to retain the hardline Nateq-Nouri or choose a more moderate leader.

Thousands of Muslim fundamentalists in Tehran vowed to defend the country's revolutionary ideals on Saturday, in an officially organised rally in support of the outgoing hardliners.

Demonstrators chanted "death to America" and denounced "liberalism," the term used to attack reformists who want a more liberal foreign policy and a more open society.

Dr. Sarraj went on to deny charges that he had been harsher with the Palestinian National Authority than he had been over Israeli abuses during the occupation and noted that he had actively helped Mr. Arafat's Fateh militants during the 1987-1994 intifada against Israeli rule.

He pointed to a major study he had done of torture in Israeli prisons and to his work with Palestinian children traumatised by the intifada conflict.

"The article published in the New York Times newspaper by journalist and writer Anthony Lewis is the sole responsibility of its author," his letter said.

"Nothing I expressed was meant to harm our people or our national authority and anything reported by the press which contradicts this will be considered incitement."

It was impossible to determine whether Dr. Sarraj wrote the letter freely or under duress.

International and Palestinian human rights organisations had condemned Dr. Sarraj's arrest and demanded he be freed.

PNA police release rights campaigner

GAZA CITY (AFP) — Palestinian authorities released leading human rights campaigner Iyad Sarraj overnight, nine days after he was detained for harshly criticising Yasser Arafat and his self-rule government in a New York Times interview, relatives said Monday.

Dr. Sarraj returned home late in the night, three days after offering an apology for his remarks in an open letter to Mr. Arafat, president of the Palestinian National Authority (PNA).

Dr. Sarraj, a psychiatrist and head of the Palestinian Independent Commission for Citizens' Rights, was arrested on May 18 at his Gaza City home.

He was accused of "insulting the New York Times" and "insulting the PNA" after he had written a letter to the newspaper in which he had said "an overwhelming sense of fear."

The regime is corrupt, dictatorial and oppressive," he said in the interview.

In the open letter to Mr. Arafat published in the Palestinian press Friday, Dr. Sarraj said that "despite differences in political interpretation" he had not meant to attack Mr. Arafat or any other Palestinian official personally.

"If due to my last statements to the media I caused personal pain, I apologise

for that," he wrote.

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Lebanon accuses Greenpeace of undermining tourism

BEIRUT (AFP) — Lebanese Environment Minister Pierre Pharaon on Sunday accused Greenpeace of trying to wreck the summer tourism season by reviving an old debate about Italian toxic waste dumped in the country in 1987-88.

"Why is it that at the beginning of each summer, that is to say at the beginning of each tourism season, Greenpeace revives the issue of the Italian waste?" Mr. Pharaon told the official news agency ANI.

He accused Greenpeace's Mediterranean spokesman Fuad Hamdan of having "backward thoughts aimed at harming Lebanon's reputation and questioning confidence in (the country's) stability."

Mr. Hamdan said on May 17 his organisation would no longer cooperate with Mr. Pharaon over the issue of the Italian toxic waste.

He accused the minister of failing to keep a promise made last year to decontaminate the polluted land at Chnair in the north of Beirut which held an "imminent risk" to the

area's groundwater.

But Mr. Pharaon said the contaminated area was limited to an area of 30 square metres and that workers from his ministry were dealing with it. He said all the waste had been "taken out of Lebanon and that the affair was definitely over."

Greenpeace and Lebanon have been at loggerheads over the Italian toxic waste for several years.

In a separate issue on Sunday, Greenpeace said cement, asbestos and chemical industries in northern Lebanon are polluting the Mediterranean coastline with cancer-causing toxins.

Tests carried out at Chekka and Selaata found emissions from the five cement factories in the area are polluting the air and the sea, Mr. Hamdan told a press conference.

"The results prove that life in the Chekka-Selaata area and its surroundings are dangerous to health. Lebanese authorities and the factories must shoulder their responsibilities for pollution and keep their promises."

Russia rabbi hopes for revived accreditation for Jewish agency

MOSCOW (AP) — The Russian government appears to be pulling back from its decision to close down the Israeli agency that coordinates Jewish immigration from Russia, the chief rabbi of Moscow said Sunday.

"I'm cautiously optimistic that the problem with the Jewish agency is being taken care of and that the closures of Jewish agency offices are part of the past," Rabbi Pinchas Goldschmidt said.

Rabbi Goldschmidt said a decision by the Russian government not to revoke the visa of the head of the Jewish agency office in Rostov-on-Don made him hopeful that the agency would be allowed to continue operating.

He said the Russian government last Wednesday had told the head of the office, Rosa Beutvis, that her visa was being revoked. But two days later, the visa was returned, which means the Jewish Agency office in Rostov-on-Don will remain open, he said.

New Afghan peace envoy could be a German

ISLAMABAD (R) — A German diplomat may succeed United Nations special peace envoy for Afghanistan Mahmud Mestiri, who has resigned on health grounds, Pakistani Foreign Minister Asef Ahmad Ali said on Sunday.

He told reporters that Islamabad would cooperate with the new envoy as it did with Mr. Mestiri's failed efforts to bring peace to Pakistan's war-shattered neighbour.

"We believe some German diplomat is being nominated for this (job),"

Mr. Ali said. But he did not give the diplomat's name.

Asked if he had confirmation of news reports that quoted U.N. officials as saying that Mr. Mestiri, a former Tunisian foreign minister, had resigned, Mr. Ali said: "We understand that it has been confirmed."

He defended Mr. Mestiri against critics who say he failed to bring warring Afghan factions to the conference table. The blame actually lies on the Afghan leadership, he said.

"It is unfortunate that for different reasons, his (Mestiri's) mission was not

completely successful," Mr. Ali said.

"But it was not a failure either because the less known U.N. operations are very much in place," he added.

"However, it must be indeed very disappointing for Mr. Mestiri to go back without the solution of the whole Afghan problem. But then other U.N. representatives too did not have any success."

"So rather than seeing as a failure of Mr. Mestiri's mission, my reaction to it is that it is a failure of the Afghan leadership. Why

should we heap the blame on the wrong person? I think the blame should be heaped on the people who are directly responsible."

Mr. Ali said Pakistan did "everything in our power" to help Mr. Mestiri's mission since he took the job in early 1994, adding: "I don't think he has anything to complain about Pakistan's role or Pakistan's support for him."

He said Pakistan would cooperate with any new envoy to be appointed by U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Ghali.

NEWS IN BRIEF

ESCWA plans special Lebanon mission

AMMAN (UNIS) — Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA) Executive Secretary Hazem Al Beblawi will head a special technical mission to Lebanon to study and prepare, in cooperation with the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL), a report on the human and material losses and damage resulting from Israeli military attacks against Lebanon. The team, composed of technical staff representing various departments and agencies of the United Nations, began its mission on May 27, in response to General Assembly Resolution A/50/22C on "the situation in the Middle East, the Israeli military attacks against Lebanon and their consequences," which requested U.N. Secretary-General Boutros Ghali to dispatch such a team to Lebanon. The secretary-general assigned the leading role in the technical mission to ESCWA and requested ESCWA's Dr. Beblawi to form and lead the team. The 11-member team will prepare its report within one month.

League wants to build Gaza university

CAIRO (AFP) — The Arab League is calling on its members to finance an "Arab university of Palestine" in Gaza City, a senior league official said Sunday. "The Arab League will sponsor the construction of an Arab university of Palestine in Gaza City" which will be built "with collective Arab participation to create a new generation of competent Palestinian professionals," said Said Kamal, league deputy secretary general with responsibility for Palestinian affairs. According to Mr. Kamal, "President Yasser Arafat has already chosen the site in Gaza City," and "the World Bank and several other international organisations have expressed an interest in contributing to it." He gave no indication of how much the project would cost.

Head of Tunisian office arrives in Israel

TEL AVIV (AFP) — The head of the Tunisian interests office due to open in Tel Aviv in the next few days arrived in Israel on Sunday, the foreign ministry said. Hamayas Djinnani's arrival in the Jewish state came 10 days after an official Tunisian delegation visited Tel Aviv to look for suitable premises for the office. The two countries do not have full diplomatic relations but decided last year to open interests offices in Tel Aviv and Tunis. The Israeli representative in Tunis, Shalom Cohen, took up his post in mid-April.

Filipina maid allegedly raped in UAE

DUBAI (AP) — A Filipina housemaid was allegedly raped in the United Arab Emirates (UAE), where another maid is in jail for killing her employer during an alleged sexual assault. The English-language Khaleej Times reported the incident Sunday, but did not identify the 39-year-old victim by name. The Philippines embassy in Abu Dhabi confirmed the newspaper report, but would not give further details. The newspaper quoted the woman, who worked in the emirate of Fujairah, as saying she was washing her employer's car when two men approached and dragged her away. One later raped her, the newspaper reported. It said one suspect had been arrested, and the Filipina was being sheltered by the Philippines embassy in Abu Dhabi. "This case is very personal for the girl and in the absence of any instructions from her, we cannot provide any details," and embassy official told the Associated Press.

Weizman 'sorry' to see women in combat

JERUSALEM (AP) — Israel's president said Sunday he was sorry that the supreme court had ruled women could perform combat duties in the military. "Just as you don't see girls running after the ball together with the men" in professional sports, "in the combat units there is no place for combatant women," Ezer Weizman told soldiers during a visit to a base. Mr. Weizman once told Alice Miller, the woman whose application to train as a pilot resulted in the supreme court's ruling last year to allow women in combat, that she should seek her future elsewhere. "Listen, missy, have you ever seen a young man dance socks?" he told her. "My opinion is unchanged, but the supreme court decided otherwise," Mr. Weizman said Sunday, according to army radio, adding that he thought combat flying was too exhausting and stressful for women pilots.

Quake jolts southern Iranian town

TEHRAN (AP) — A moderate earthquake jolted a town in southern Fars province for the second time in two days, the Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA) reported Sunday. The official agency said the tremor, with a preliminary magnitude of 4.8, hit the town of Khonj on Saturday at 9:33 p.m. (1803 GMT). It did not report any injuries or damage. On Friday, a relatively strong earthquake with a magnitude of 5.4 hit Khonj, about 800 kilometres south of Tehran. Nearly 20 people were injured and several houses in the town's old quarter were damaged in that quake, IRNA reported. Iran is earthquake prone, with widespread tremors occurring almost weekly in various parts of the country. A quake of magnitude 4 can cause moderate damage and a magnitude 5, considerable damage.

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel: 73111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

15:00 Irq
15:20 Captain Planet
15:45 Hot Stars
16:10 The Bomb Marmion Show
16:30 ALF
17:00 News Flash
17:20 Ordy
17:35 Magazine — La Vie Devant Moi
17:30 Que Le Meilleur Gagne
18:00 Magazine — Savoir Plus Sante
19:00 Le Journal
19:15 Magazine — Ushuaia
19:30 News (Headlines)
19:35 Encounter
20:00 Comedy — Home Improvement
20:30 Dvc. — Life in the Prozac
21:10 Star Trek
22:00 News in English
22:25 The Build and the Beautiful
23:10 Feature film: "Break Point"

PRAYER TIMES

03:55 Fajr
05:25 (Shorib) Dhuhr
12:35 Dhuhr
16:13 Asr
19:38 Maghrib
21:10 Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church

Sweidieh, Tel. 810740

Assemblies of God Church, Tel.

632785

St. Joseph Church Tel. 624591

Church of the Annunciation Tel.

637441

De La Salle Church Tel. 622366

Church of the Annunciation Tel.

625411

Anglican Church Tel. 62520A

Armenian Catholic Church Tel.

711331

Armenian Orthodox Church Tel.

775261

St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751

Assyrian International Church Tel.

63520B

Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel:

64328B

German-speaking Evangelical

Congregation Tel. 845457

The Church of Jesus Christ of

Latter-day Saints Tel. 659332

Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691

The Evangelical Local Church in

Amman

Tel. 811295

English-speaking

Latin Catholic Parish Tel. 614191

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department

of Meteorology.

Mild weather conditions will prevail

with temperatures below average

and winds northwesterly moderate

to active. On Wednesday

temperatures are expected to rise

becoming around average. In

Aqaba, winds will be northerly

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

moderate to active and seas calm.

Min./Max. temp.

Amman 14/26

Aqaba 20/35

Dheirah 13/29

Jordan Valley 18/33

Yesterday's high temperatures:

Amman 27, Aqaba 36, Humidity

readings: Amman 42 per cent,

Aqaba 32 per cent.

USEFUL

TELEPHONE

NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:

Dr. Jamal Ibrahim 847351

Dr. Asaf Al Ashhab 62597

Dr. Abbas Al Hakeem 883436

Dr. Muhammad Al Amadi 778929

Fendous pharmacy 641101

Al Asma pharmacy 637185

Nawakh pharmacy 623672

Al Salam pharmacy 636770

Yousuf pharmacy 649455

Shimabani pharmacy 637661

Nawakh pharmacy 623672

Najih pharmacy 627652

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 657111

Civil Defence Department 661111

Rescue 630341

Civil Defence Emergency 199

Fire Brigade 61701

Highway Police 775121

Traffic Police 843402

Public Security Department 893991

Hotel Complaints 630321

Price Complaints 661176

Water and Sewerage 897467

Amman Municipality 787111

Complaints 787111

Telephone Information 121

Overseas Calls 111230

Central Amman Telephone 623101

Repairs 623101

Aqaba Telephone Repairs 641101

Jordan Television 773111

Radio Jordan 774111

Water Authority 630101

Aqaba 815615

Jordan Electricity Authority 815615

Electric Power 636381

RJ Flight Information 18-53201

Queen Alia Intl. Airport 18-53201

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:

Hus



Minister of Tourism Saleh Irsheidat Monday meets with his Palestinian National Authority counterpart Elias Freij who is in Amman on an official visit (Petra photo)

Jordan, PNA look into tourism promotion cooperation

AMMAN (Petra) — Cooperation between Jordan and the Palestine self-rule areas in tourism and prospects for launching joint marketing of tourist attractions were at the heart of discussions Monday between Minister of Tourism and Antiquities Saleh Irsheidat and his Palestinian counterpart Elias Freij.

Speaking at the meeting Mr. Freij said he hoped his country will learn from Jordan's experience and expertise in hotel training and tourist services.

Referring to tourism in Palestine, Mr. Freij said that he expected more than one and a half million tourists to visit the self-rule areas of Palestine this year, adding that his ministry was drawing up plans for further boosting the tourism industry.

He said tourist guides are being trained and tourist police are being recruited to help promote the tourism sector in Palestine.

Dr. Irsheidat reviewed Jordan's tourism plans and plans for attracting investments in hotels and other tourist projects in the Kingdom pointing out that several hotels are being constructed in Petra, at the Dead Sea and in Amman.

He said the ministry has prepared integrated plans for developing tourism noting that so far Jordan has 8,300 hotel rooms but still needs more than 20,000 others to cope with the increase in the number of tourists.

Later in a statement to the Jordan News Agency, Petra, Dr. Irsheidat said the tourism sector has been experienced a revival following the signing of the peace treaty with Israel in 1994.

"The increases exceeded all expectations, and in the past year visitors to Jordan rose by 25 per cent over 1994, earning the country about \$733 million," said Dr. Irsheidat.

European parliamentarians say Jordan can play bridging role with EU states

AMMAN (J.T.) — Ingo Friedrich, head of a delegation on the Mashreq countries and the Gulf states from the European Parliament currently on a visit to Jordan, Monday voiced Europe's backing for Jordan's endeavours to conclude a partnership with the EU this year and said Jordan can serve as a bridge of cooperation between Europe and the Arab World.

Speaking after a meeting with Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti, Mr. Friedrich said that the EU and Jordan were expected to hold a final round of talks on the partnership question in June and could conclude an agreement in July paving the ground for further bolstering Jordanian EU economic cooperation.

Referring to the Middle East question, Mr. Friedrich said he discussed the issue with the Prime Minister and voiced Europe's absolute support for Jordan's endeavours for a lasting and comprehensive peace in the region.

The Jordan News Agency,

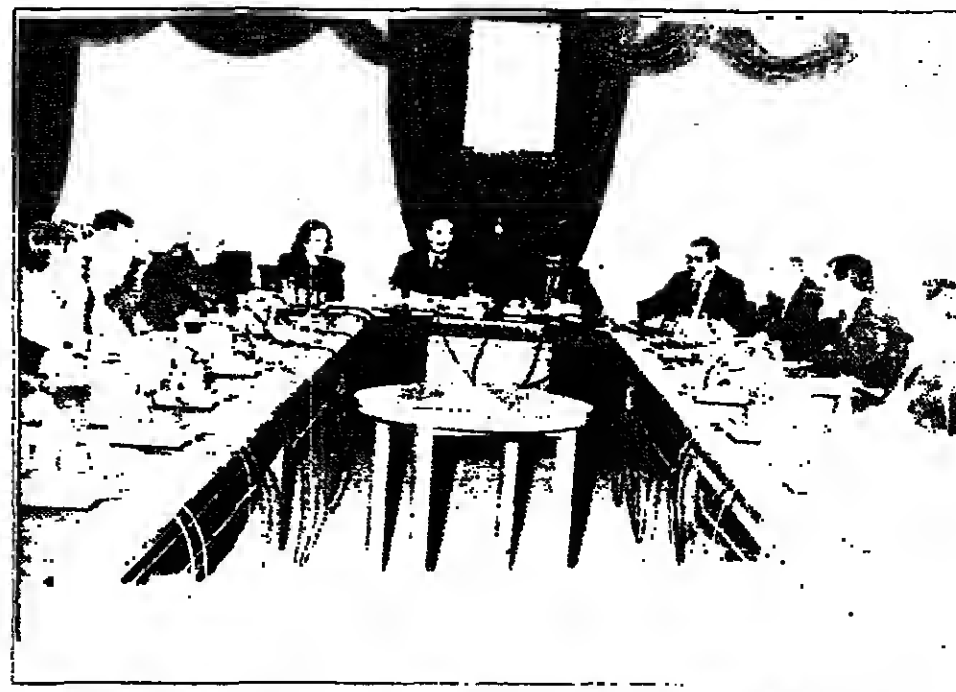
Petra, said Mr. Kabariti. Mr. Friedrich and his accompanying delegation discussed EU-Jordanian relations in general and ways to strengthen bilateral relations in parliamentary and economic fields in particular.

The prime minister also reviewed with the EU delegation the latest developments in the region and issues of common concern to both sides.

Earlier Mr. Friedrich met with Speaker of the Lower House of Parliament Saad Hayel Srour and listened to a briefing on Jordan's parliamentary life and the developments in the Middle East and the peace process.

Mr. Srour also discussed the situation in Lebanon following Israel's latest attacks on southern Lebanon, describing them as negative elements affecting the peace process.

He voiced the Jordanian parliament's intent to maintain a dialogue with the European parliamentarians. Several Jordanian parliament members were present at the meeting along with the EU delegation.



House Speaker Saad Hayel Srour Monday meets with a delegation on relations with Mashreq countries and the Gulf states from the European Parliament (Petra photo)

The EU delegation later met with Speaker of the Upper House of Parliament Ahmad Lawzi and said

Europe is eager to help this region develop and to see peace prevail.

Mr. Friedrich reviewed the developments in the Middle East and listened to a brief-

ing on the process of democracy in the Kingdom and calls for increased cooperation between the European and Jordanian parliaments.

Khleifat meets with visiting British MPs

AMMAN (Petra) — Minister of Interior Awar Khleifat received at his office a delegation from Britain's House of Commons and briefed the deputies on the ministry's duties and the legislation which licenses political parties in Jordan.

The minister stressed Jordan's role in offering services to the Palestinian refugee camps and said: "The government extends assistance to our brethren in the camps, and this in turn increases the toll on the government."

Mr. Khleifat stressed Jordan's interest in establishing reform and rehabilitation centres for former convicts but added that there was no organised crime in Jordan "because the Jordanian society is free of gangs."

Attending the meeting was Deputy Fawzi Tueimeh.

The British delegation also visited the Royal Scientific Society (RSS) and met RSS President Hani Mulki who briefed the group on the duties and the services carried out at the society in its various fields to help the Jordanian society to rely on its own expertise.

2,800 government doctors stage strike

Cabinet promises to study JMA demands — Bataineh

By Rana Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — At least 2,800 government physicians around the Kingdom stopped work for two hours in all government medical institutions to show their dissatisfaction with what they see as the government not meeting their demands for professional rights and benefits equal to their private sector counterparts.

"We do not like strikes, and we are not against the people because we are from and with people. All we want is attention because we are being treated unjustly," Ra'ed Hijazi, an obstetrician at Al Bashir Hospital in Amman said.

Minister of Health Aref Bataineh, who met with around 150 striking physicians at Al Bashir, said he received assurances from the government of Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti that the doctor's demands would be studied.

Dr. Bataineh asked the strikers to abandon their work stoppage to serve needy patients, adding again that the government will study carefully their demands, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, reported.

According to Dr. Hijazi, the strike was held in all government institutions during regular working hours (between 10 a.m. and 12 noon) in a bid to pressure the government to improve their working conditions.

The strike period will increase exponentially until all the demands are met by the government, Jordan Medical Association President Bassam Dajani had told the Jordan Times one day before the strike.

The demands include improving the financial status and scientific levels of the government doctors and allowing them to operate private clinics after working hours.

According to Dr. Hijazi, a member of the committee of the government doctors, these physicians have, since 1992, attempted to obtain equality with their colleagues in other private and military health care institutions.

"We have received promises from previous governments that things will change and we will be accommodated, but until now we have not," he

added.

The strike, which was organised by the Jordan Medical Association (JMA) and the Committee of Governmental Doctors, was launched after negotiations with government officials failed to reach a solution.

The strike, which will resume on Wednesday four hours, say the strikers, will not affect services in the emergency and obstetrics units of the healthcare facilities involved.

An official at Princess Basma told the Jordan Times that about 70 doctors left their clinics at the hospital, went outdoors and sat in the street in protest.

The source added that the doctors dealt with emergency and maternity cases, and resumed their regular work at 12 noon.

According to Dr. Hijazi, the strike was nation-wide, and doctors in all government institutions participated.

"We are hoping to receive a written commitment from government officials in which they fulfill their promises and meet our demands," Dr. Hijazi said.

The president of the Jordanian Nursing Association

(JNA), Hashem Salameh, joined the striking physicians at Al Bashir Hospital in "symbolic support for their colleagues."

According to Mr. Salameh, the JNA is planning a similar protest in the coming few weeks.

"We would like to have a 90 per cent raise, rather than 50 per cent raise, in addition to the regular salary we are receiving and so far we have not received any assurances by the government," Mr. Salameh told the Jordan Times.

In addition, he said that nurses are seeking financial incentives, which all physicians and doctors at government institutes enjoy.

He said that the around 2,200 government nurses are expected to join in the strike in mid-June and will also start with a two-hour strike which "could later extend to days if our demands are not met by the government."

Mr. Salameh said the physicians' and nurses' strikes were not planned together and "that it was a mere coincidence that the decision by both associations to launch strikes was at the same time."

House speaker to visit Qatar next week

Discussions to centre on Arab solidarity, cooperation

AMMAN (Petra) — Speaker of the Lower House of Parliament Saad Hayel Srour Monday announced that he will make an official visit to Qatar on June 3 to discuss several issues of concern to Jordan and the Gulf state, ways to end the differences among Arab countries and inter-Arab parliamentary cooperation.

Mr. Srour said the visit comes close on the heels of an Arab Parliamentary Union (APU) meeting held in Damascus last week, attended by representatives of various Arab parliaments. He said the trip to Qatar would promote Jordanian-Qatari cooperation in highlighting Arab



Sa'ad Hayel Srour issues at various regional and international parliamentary forums.

Mr. Srour, who was invited by Speaker of the Qatari Shura Council Mohammad

Khalifi, said the visit is part of Qatar and Jordanian endeavours to bolster solidarity in the Arab World and serve Arab causes.

"We look forward, as parliamentarians from Jordan, to further dialogues and meetings with other Arab parliamentarians for the sake of reviving joint Arab action vis-a-vis issues facing the nation," he added.

Mr. Srour lauded the Qatari leadership for its continued drive to restore solidarity among the Arab states.

The House Speaker will be accompanied on the three-day visit by Deputies Ibrahim Kilani, Mohammad Huneid and Ali Shanti.

Ruling on SSC indemnities draws light on need to amend Labour Law, say officials, unions

By Mervat Sawadeh
Special to The Jordan Times

AMMAN — A court ruling Sunday, that the Social Security Corporation (SSC) is not responsible for offering end-of-service indemnities to the corporation's beneficiaries, is in line with the Social Security Law but underlines the need for change in the Labour Law, officials and unions said on Monday.

"The ruling is just," said Zayed Radaideh, a lawyer representing the Social Security Corporation in court.

"The corporation's law stipulates that the SSC should pay pension according to the period in which the beneficiary was covered by the SSC and not before," he told the Jordan Times.

Sunday's court decision revoked a ruling that was taken by the Court of First Instance that obliged the SSC to pay end-of-service compensation for an

employee of Jordan Electric Power Company who subscribed to the SSC in mid-80s after more than 20 years in service.

The ruling aroused fears then of opening the way for tens of thousands of applications for similar payments amounting to tens of millions of dinars from the state-owned corporation.

Minister of Labour Abdul Hafez Shakhaneh said that under the labour law, only employees who are not covered by the SSC are eligible for compensation upon retirement, and that such compensation should be provided by the employer.

"In the case of the Electric Company employee, the company is obliged to pay end-of-employment benefits for the years the employee worked for the company," Mr. Shakhaneh told The Jordan Times.

Khaled Shureim, president of the Federation of

Labour Unions, said that although the ruling was in line with the law, it highlighted the need for immediate amendments in both the Labour and the SSC laws.

"The end-of-employment compensation is the right of every Jordanian worker, but it is the responsibility of the employers rather than the SSC," Mr. Shureim argued.

He said subscription to the SSC is taken as a pretext by employers to shirk their responsibilities towards their employees and not provide them any compensation — this issue, he said, should be addressed by a new labour law.

"Furthermore, many employers try to avoid subscribing to the SSC, and we estimate that around 200,000 workers are not covered by the SSC," Mr. Shureim said. "The SSC should apply tighter control on the



Abdul Hafez Shakhaneh country's different firms," he added.

Hundreds of thousand of workers in the country's 900,000-strong labour force are subscribers to the SSC which started operating in 1980.

The SSC offers monthly pensions or lumpsum settlements to beneficiaries upon retirement

Abul Ragheb promotes establishment of pan-Arab economic organisation

AMMAN (Petra) — Minister of Industry and Trade Ali Abul Ragheb Monday called on the Arab countries to create what he called a pan Arab economic organisation through which the Arab private sector could play a leading role in creating opportune investment climates.

Addressing the opening session of a pan-Arab meeting entitled: The Role Of The Private Sector In Developing Arab Countries' Economies, the minister said such an organisation could base its functions on a common partnership among the Arab states and allow the private sector to take the lead in economic and trade matters.

He said the organisation should also be able to promote inter-Arab trade and increase the volume of exchanged goods and primary materials among the Arab states.

"We are going through a very important stage in our economy witnessing deep rooted economic changes at the regional and international levels representing serious challenges," said Mr. Abul Ragheb.

He said the Arab states should reduce the restrictions on investments and create opportune investment climates, allowing the free transfer of Arab capital.

Chamber of Industry President Khaloud Abu Hassan addressed the opening session underlining the importance of mobilising the efforts of the Arab chambers of industry, agriculture and commerce to confront the challenges facing their nation and cope with economic developments.

He said Arab governments are called on to allow the free flow of Arab capital and movement of investors within the Arab World and remove all obstacles and barriers impeding investments.

Mr. Abu Hassan also demanded an immediate lifting of the UN embargo on Iraq to allow that country to participate in the development of the Arab World.

His views were echoed by Haidar Murad, chairman of the Federation of Jordanian Chambers of Commerce, who said joint Arab action has been lacking in economy matters over the past 40 years.

He said Arab governments were responsible for killing the Council of Arab Economic Unity and the Arab Common Market which should have served as catalyst for integrating the Arab countries' economies.

Royal Wings studies feasibility of launching flights to Gaza

AMMAN (J.T.) — Royal Wings expects to approach the Palestinian Civil Aviation Authority within two to three weeks about the possibility of commencing flights to Gaza, said Royal Wings Sales and Marketing Manager Amar Balkar.

"We think there is great potential to add a new route to Gaza once the Palestinian Authority and the Israelis sign an agreement on civil aviation," he said.

Royal Wings and its parent company Royal Jordanian are currently in the process of determining the feasibility of adding the destination to the Royal Wings schedule. Mr. Balkar expects that a feasibility study will be completed within two months.

"Our expectation is that we would fly five to seven times weekly," he said. "But nothing has been finalised yet."

There is tremendous potential for that route, because we know that air travel is preferred to overland travel between Amman and Gaza since people avoid a lot of time and hassle."

He added that Royal Wings expects that it could achieve a seating factor of 70-75 per cent on an Amman-Gaza route, but that prices for the flight are not yet determined. The short-haul airline, a subsidiary of Royal Jordanian, began operations February 10 with two daily flights from Amman to Agaba, and in April added a five times weekly flight to Tel Aviv, Israel.

To date, the airline has transported approximately 17,000 passengers since it began operations, equivalent to a seating factor of 66 per cent. Its single aircraft — a 50-seater, Bombardier Dash 8-300 — meets the demands of both scheduled routes as well as other occasional unscheduled flights.

Mr. Balkar said the single aircraft would be able to accommodate an additional route, and added that the craft is now under-utilised. "The craft is only used five hours per day," he said, "and we could use it at least seven, which would be a better utilisation of the craft."

"There is always the option of adding a craft," he said. "We prefer another craft, but not until we add more new routes."

He said that Royal Wings and Royal Jordanian are currently negotiating to add Alexandria, Egypt and Tabouq, Saudi Arabia to its list of destinations.

Future plans also include operating regional flights to Beirut, Damascus, Larnaca, Ghardaqa and Al Sheikh.

4 World News

Jordan Times, Tuesday, May 28, 1996

Albania's ruling Democrats claims majority in election

TIRANA (R) — Albania's ruling Democratic Party said Monday it was confident of capturing more than 60 per cent of the vote in a general election branded by the opposition as a travesty of democracy.

"I am sure that...the Democratic Party has won across the country... more than 60 percent of the national vote," senior Democratic Party official Mirush Mati told Albanian Television.

Albanian Television news said no results were expected from the Central Electoral Commission until later Monday morning.

The Socialists, reformed successors of the hardline Communist Party that ruled Albania for nearly half a century, and eight other opposition parties announced midway through the voting Sunday that they were pulling out.

They complained of harassment by the police and the Democratic Party of pro-Western president Sali Berisha.

But Electoral Committee Chairman Edmir Kapidani seemed unconcerned, saying: "Besides a few isolated incidents which we have dealt with, the election went normally."

Socialist deputy leader Servet Pellumbi told a news conference: "Our decision to denounce this election farce orchestrated by Berisha is justified. This is a violation of human rights and freedoms."

Thousands of Democratic Party supporters celebrated into the night, hanging out of cars, trucks and buses in a victory parade around the central Skanderbeg Square.

"It's the best celebration since we got rid of the dictators," said pensioner Naim Duka, "the Democrats had to win this election to put the final nail in the coffin of the left."

A buoyant Berisha said he was not surprised by the election boycott, saying the opposition parties had pulled out because they were staring heavy defeat in the face.

"I consider their defeat, their political suicide, the greatest victory for Albania," Mr. Berisha told Reuters.

He said he believed his pro-market party had done better than the 62 per cent of the vote it won in the last general election in 1992. Voter turnout was expected to be over 80 per cent.

A huge Democrat victory in the third free nationwide poll since the Communist government was ousted in December 1990, would surpass most expectations by Western political

analysts and diplomats who had predicted a closer race.

Albania's 2.2 eligible voters were voting to elect members to the 140-seat parliament.

The main opposition Socialists, the centre-right Democratic Alliance, the centre-left Social Democrats and far-right Democratic Party of the Right said they had withdrawn their candidates. Five smaller parties not represented to the outgoing parliament did likewise.

Socialist Party spokesman Kastriot Islami alleged that voting had taken place in "a climate of terror", telling a hastily-called news conference: "We do not recognise the result of the elections whatever it is."

Mr. Islami said police officers and members of the secret police had beaten and harassed opposition candidates and election officials. The Socialist Party urged the Electoral Committee and the Constitutional Court to declare the election invalid.

Two European Union observers said Monday they had seen many irregularities in the Albanian general election. Therese Boutsen, president of the Belgian Young Socialists, spoke of "pressure and intimidation measures exerted by police against opposition members and supporters" in a statement released in Tirana and quoted by the Belga News Agency.

Some of the militants had sustained broken noses and ribs in confrontations with police, she was quoted as saying. The U.S.-based Society for Democratic Culture also said Sunday that some incidents of threats and violence had occurred during the election.

Belga also quoted French Socialist Jean-Francois Vallin, secretary-general of the Socialist group in the European Parliament, as saying that the election had been unfair due in part to the absence of opposition members in the commissions set up to control the transparency of the vote.

Ms. Boutsen and Mr. Vallin are among some 400 observers sent by the European Union and the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) to monitor the election across Europe's poorest nation.

"Any administrative court in France would have annulled the election in the constituencies (where irregularities were observed) for less than that," Mr. Vallin was quoted as saying.



President Sali Berisha (left) embraces Parliament President Pjeter Arburi as party whip Tritan Shehu (right) looks on in the Democratic Party's headquarters in the early morning hours Monday. Democratic Party officials said to be confident of capturing more than 60 per cent of the vote in a general election branded by the opposition as a travesty of democracy. The Socialists and eight other opposition parties announced midway through the voting that they were pulling out (Reuters photo)

Tanks leave Dhaka military barracks

DHAKA (AFP) — Army tanks guarding Bangladesh's army headquarters were withdrawn Monday and sent to nearby installations, one week after an abortive military revolt, defence sources said.

Meanwhile, the Defeoce Ministry sources said Monday that a "high-powered" military court of enquiry, set up to investigate the revolt, is to be headed by Major General Matiuir Rahman, who has also been named the new chief of the Mymensingh Division.

Other members of the five-member court all hold ranks of brigadiers, the Defeoce Ministry said.

Defence sources said the tanks were withdrawn after the army chief, Major General Muhammad Mahbubur Rahman, toured the troubled Bogra and Mymensingh Barracks, in northern Bangladesh, during the past two days.

Witnesses said the number of tanks positioned at the Dhaka Cantonment Barracks was the most seen in any coup attempt since the first putsch in 1975.

The army headquarters, home of Gen.

Rahman and where sacked army chief Lieutenant General Abu Saleh Muhammad Nasim is detained, was under guard by about a dozen tanks, the witnesses said.

Entry to the area was also relaxed. The army chief held meetings with his officers and troops Monday in "darbars", or open sessions, explaining the actions of the rebel leaders as well as praising action taken by troops loyal to government, the sources said.

He flew to Bogra and Mymensingh cantonments, the scene of major revolts on May 20, Sunday and told the troops "you must take a renewed vow to uphold the sanctity of the constitution and place national interest above everything."

Gen. Nasim is accused of staging an abortive revolt on May 20, defying orders by President Abdur Rahman Biswas to force the retirement of two senior army officers.

Mr. Biswas is also the defence minister and commander in chief of the armed forces.

C. African rebels begin returning to barracks as tension drops in Bangui

BANGUI (AFP) — Rebel soldiers in the Central African Republic were returning to barracks Monday in convoys protected by French troops, French military sources said, after the country's former colonial master negotiated a peaceful end to a nine-day army rebellion.

A high-ranking French officer told AFP the operation had begun during the night and would be completed by Monday evening.

The soldiers agreed to return to a suburban barracks Sunday night after President Ange-Felix Patasse promised them amnesty, a breakthrough in the revolt sparked by an attempt to disarm troops who rebelled last month over unpaid wages.

France sent in about 1,000 troops to prop up the Patasse regime and reinforce the 2,400 soldiers it already has stationed there at what is one of Paris' key military bases in Africa.

Last week French soldiers fired into the air to protect their embassy after thousands of demonstrators shouting "death to the French" a move by French troops to prevent rebels from capturing the state radio station.

Sunday's agreement appeared to herald a return to normalcy in Bangui, devastated by looting and fighting between rebels and loyalist government troops.

A number of city centre shops ransacked in the anarchy that followed the revolt

reopened Monday, notably a pharmacy and supermarket, and cigarette and bread vendors had begun setting up their stalls.

In a sign of easing tensions, French paratroopers conducted foot patrols in downtown areas, and were no longer in combat dress or wearing flak jackets.

The high-ranking French officer told AFP some of the rebels who had been located in the La Kouanga district near the central market were taken overnight to barracks at Point Kilométrique 12, 12 kilometres from the centre of Bangui on the road to Cameroon.

He said rebel soldiers would be taken back to their barracks in small groups and not en masse. "We are going to treat them case by case, depending on the demand."

French paratroopers in La Kouanga said there were 80 rebel troops in the area before the evacuation began. Others were located at the Kasai Military Barracks two kilometres outside Bangui.

Sunday's "technical arrangement" was reached in talks between rebel spokesmen and a French military mediator and accepted by Mr. Patasse, who pledged to grant the mutineers an amnesty. They were not ordered to surrender their weapons.

Rebel spokesman Sergeant Cyriake Souke said Sunday his side had agreed to a "tactical retreat."

India's first BJP government totters on the brink of collapse

NEW DELHI (AFP) — India's first Hindu nationalist government was on the brink of collapse Monday, as a determined opposition declared its intention to oust it with a parliamentary vote of no-confidence.

Opposition leaders pledged to topple Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee's administration during a seven-hour debate expected to usher in the country's second coalition government in a fortnight.

"The nation has no confidence in this minority government," said Sbarad Pawar of the main opposition Congress (I) Party, which has joined forces with other opposition parties to challenge the 12-day-old government.

"This government will fall soon," said Ramvilas Paswan, a leader of the centrist Janata Dal (People's Party), the main component in the United Front centrist alliance, which is poised to take power.

The opposition leaders' comments came despite a fervent promise by Mr. Vajpayee to preserve India's secularism were his Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP, Indian People's Party) government allowed to stay in office.

A sombre Vajpayee, who opened the debate in the Lok Sabha, or lower house, said his ruling coalition would remain wedded to secularism, denying it would establish a theocratic state.

"We are tied to the constitution's secular principles," Mr. Vajpayee, 69, said in an hour-long speech amid thumping of desks by MPs from the BJP and its four small allies.

"India has always been a secular country, should be secular and there is no danger to secularism in this country," Mr. Vajpayee said in a bid to deflect the chief criticism thrown at his pro-Hindu party.

"We will never become a theocratic like our neighbours," he added in a clear reference to Pakistan.

Mr. Vajpayee said the BJP considered India's 100-million-strong Muslim community as "brothers."

But Mr. Pawar and Mr. Paswan insisted the BJP was a Hindu communal party, saying the December 1992 destruction of a 16th-century mosque by hordes of BJP supporters was an example of its anti-Muslim bias.

The BJP and its allies command just 194 MPs in the 545-seat Lok Sabha and are expected to lose the make-or-break no-confidence motion, on which MPs will vote later Monday or Tuesday.

Mr. Vajpayee condemned the combined opposition, which has more than 300 MPs, for joining hands with the sole aim of toppling the BJP, asserting that the verdict of the April-May ballot was for his party.

"The parties which have now ganged up against the BJP government had fought the election against each other," he said.

"There was no common programme among them. And it is so even now."

Mr. Vajpayee became India's 10th prime minister on May 16 after his party emerged with the single largest share of the Lok Sabha.

Clapton saves his guitars from burning home

LONDON (R) — British rock star Eric Clapton's luxurious London residence was damaged by fire at the weekend — but he managed to save his guitars. "The first I knew about the fire was when I came back from a day out, opened the front door, and smoke billowed out," the world-famous guitarist was quoted by newspapers as saying. "The first thing I did was grab my guitars. None of them was damaged, thank God." No one was injured in Saturday night's fire at the £1 million (\$1.5 million) Mews House in London's Chelsea district, which was started by an electrical fault, police said. "I'm absolutely gutted. There's a lot of damage. The top floor of the house is almost gone," Clapton said.

Britain adds anti-road rage tips to driver manual

LONDON (R) — Tips on keeping calm are to be included in a government manual for learner drivers after an outbreak of "road rage" in Britain including a roadside fatal stabbing, a newspaper said Sunday. A new edition of the Highway Code, which Britons preparing to take their driving test must learn by rote, will include a section on "anti-confrontation," the Sunday Times said.

Only five years ago, British police thought the section was unnecessary because road rage was limited to America. But road rage has increased in Britain as car ownership has risen and the nation's roads have become ever more crowded.

Last week, a 21-year-old man was stabbed to death in front of his teenage fiancée by another driver after an altercation at traffic lights.

"Leave your guns at home," Israeli voters are told

TEL AVIV (R) — Israeli voters were urged Sunday to leave their guns at home when they cast ballots in national elections Wednesday. "The Central Elections Committee appeals to the electorate to come to polling stations without any weapons, bags or packages — if possible," the group, overseeing the campaign and balloting, said in newspaper advertisements. Many Israelis, especially settlers in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip, are licensed to carry weapons for self-defence. Israel is on a security alert, fearing Muslim militants might renew a campaign of suicide bombings to coincide with the poll.

U.K. teens stop eating beef — survey

LONDON (R) — Nearly half of Britain's teenagers say they have stopped eating beef because of the scare over mad cow disease, a survey published Monday found. Of 430 teenagers interviewed in England, Scotland and Wales, 47 per cent said they had stopped eating British beef and 70 per cent were worried about its safety. Four per cent said they had cut all meat from their diets. The poll, done for BBC Television, found that teenagers doubted government assurances that the risk of contracting Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease (CJD) from beef was extremely low. But 41 per cent of teenagers surveyed said they would carry on eating British beef regardless. Figures released earlier this month showed British beef consumption had rebounded to 85 per cent of its level before the crisis over mad cow disease. In March scientists identified a new strain of CJD that struck people under 40 — and half of the 10 British victims were teenagers.

Taiwan eases visits by China experts

TAIPEI (R) — Taiwan's top agency for China policy eased a ban on visits by experts from rival China in a bid to mend soured relations, an official said Monday.

"Despite gloomy relations across the Taiwan Strait, our opening policy towards the mainland remains unchanged," said Kao Koong-Lian, spokesman for the cabinet-level Mainland Affairs Council.

"It shows our goodwill to improve relations with the mainland," Mr. Kao said in a broadcast on state-funded radio.

The council decision gives a go-ahead for visits to Taiwan by mainland experts in the legal, property, construction and media sectors, Mr. Kao said.

The decision also allows Taiwan's state-run firms to import parts and semi-finished goods from the mainland without having to report the transactions to Taiwan authorities, he said.

Taiwan now allows visits by mainland economic, agricultural, cultural and educational, financial, and environmental protection professionals.

Taiwan and China have been rivals since the end of the Chinese Civil War in 1949. Beijing claims Taiwan as a rebel province.

Contacts across the Taiwan Strait were strictly banned before a political thaw begun in the late 1980s opened the door to huge flows of Taiwan people and capital into the mainland.

Visits by Taiwanese to the mainland number in the millions every year, while mainlanders visiting Taiwan, where many restrictions still apply, number only in the tens of thousands.

Relations have soured badly in the past year due to Beijing's suspicions that an increasingly democratic Taiwan is moving toward independence and away from its longstanding support for eventual reunification with the mainland.

Strains peaked with China's launching of military exercises near Taiwan in the run-up to the island's historic March presidential election in what Beijing acknowledged was a bid to intimidate voters against independence.

Interior Minister Huang Kun-Hui said in parliament Monday that Taipei does not rule out the possibility of resuming talks with Beijing about overlapping territorial waters.

Senior Chinese official freed from jail

BEIJING (R) — China said Monday it had released Bao Tong, the only senior official jailed for backing the 1989 student pro-democracy demonstrations, but his family said he had disappeared.

The official Xinhua News Agency announced Mr. Bao's release after a seven-year jail term, but gave no details of the whereabouts of the 63-year-old aide to top-level Communist Party chief Zhao Ziyang.

Mr. Bao's release came a week before the seventh anniversary of the student-led pro-democracy protests, crushed by the army on June 4, 1989, with heavy loss of life.

The family was sceptical about his release. "We have trouble finding him," his son Bao Puliu said by telephone.

"We don't know who has custody. He is not home. It appears he has disappeared," the younger Bao said.

The family has been under surveillance in recent days.

Security was tight in and around the western Beijing apartment building where the Baos live. Foreign reporters were barred from the site.

Xinhua said Mr. Bao would be denied his political rights for two years, meaning he cannot speak to foreign reporters.

The agency said Mr. Bao was in good health after receiving medical care for a range of ailments.

His family said he had jaw and neck ailments and intestinal polyps that required six operations, as well as swollen lymph nodes that could indicate cancer. He had spent much of the past two years in a prison hospital.

Diplomats said Mr. Bao's release would be a source of anxiety for China's leaders who must fear he may reveal details of his close association with the secretive dealings of the highest party echelons in the run-up to the 1989 crackdown.

Previously when the prison terms of some political prisoners ended, they were taken outside Beijing, away from the media attention they would receive in the Chinese capital.

The end of Bao's sentence could hardly have come at a more sensitive time for China's security apparatus, diplomats said.

Police, nervous that the June 4 anniversary could trigger commemorative activities or unrest, detain dissidents and place political activists and foreign reporters under tight surveillance each May.

Mr. Bao was taken into custody on May

29, 1989, just days before Beijing sent tanks and troops into Tiananmen Square to crush five weeks of student demonstrations.

"If (the authorities) can do things according to the law and release him as scheduled, I'll be very happy," Mr. Bao's wife, Jiang Zongcao, said in a recent interview.

"I hope he'll be released immediately," Mrs. Jiang said. "My family and I miss him very much."

"In the past seven years, days wore on like years," said Mrs. Jiang, who had kept a calendar counting down the days to Mr. Bao's release. "We long for (his) freedom. We long for our new life."

Sentenced to seven years in prison in July 1992, Mr. Bao is the most high-ranking Communist Party official to be imprisoned for his alleged role in the protests.

Mr. Bao, former secretary to the ruling party's omnipotent politburo Standing Committee, was convicted of leaking state secrets, counter-revolutionary propaganda and incitement.

The court verdict gave no details of his actions, based on a conversation with an associate on May 17, 1989, but they are believed to relate to the declaration of martial law in Beijing on May 20 of which the students had advance warning.

Mr. Bao was held in solitary confinement for most of his sentence.

While Mr. Bao was jailed, his mentor and political patron, reformist party chief Zhao, has lived under virtual house arrest in a home with a courtyard in central Beijing.

Mr. Zhao dropped from public view on May 19, 1989, when he visited students occupying Tiananmen Square and beseeched their leaders to end the protests. He was formally sacked weeks later.

Later Monday, a family member said Chinese police are holding Mr. Bao under virtual house arrest until after the June 4 anniversary of the suppression of the movement.

"They are holding him at a bungalow outside Beijing... Because of June 4," his daughter, Bao Jian, said by telephone.

She said her father, released from jail Monday after serving a seven-year jail term for "counter-revolutionary incitement" and leaking state secrets, had been moved to a house in the western hills, a popular holiday area of hills and woods outside Beijing.

"They said that he would be held for eight to 10 more days before he can go home," she said.

Security tightened in Kashmir capital ahead of elections

SRINAGAR, India (R) — Tight security blanketed Srinagar, summer capital of troubled Jammu and Kashmir state, Monday as separatist rebels launched four days of strikes ahead of the final phase of India's general elections.

Officials said about 60,000 troops — four times the usual strength — had been posted in and around Srinagar.

"We are content with the security arrangements, it looks adequate," a senior police official said. He said police had detained more than 100 people as a precautionary measure.

The run-up to the elections has been marred by weekend protests in which six people died and more than 70 were injured.

Separatist guerrillas, fighting for a merger with neighbouring Pakistan or an independent homeland, called the strike as part of a campaign to boycott Thursday's elections.

Elections are taking place for the first time in the state since a separatist rebellion broke out in 1990, in which police and hospitals say more than 20,000 people have died.

Most shops remained shut Monday and few vehicles were on the streets. Residents said the closure was more out of fear than support for the Harkat-ul-Momineen rebel group, which called the day-long strike. Indian authorities say the group is backed by Pakistan.

A three-day strike by the All Parties Hurriyat (Freedom) Conference is scheduled to begin Tuesday.

Monday's strike hampered campaigning by candidates, who moved around in bullet-proof jeeps ringed by security forces. Campaigning for the polls ends Tuesday.

While villagers outside the city of Srinagar told Reuters they were keen to vote, most urban residents said they were reluctant to cast their ballots and afraid security forces might force them to vote.

"We are not keen to vote, because we have little faith in the elections," said a Srinagar cloth merchant.



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Better ties for a better future

WITHOUT HAVING to read too much into the telegramme of congratulation that the Emir of Kuwait Sheikh Jaber Al Ahmad Al Sabah sent to His Majesty King Hussein on the occasion of the country's golden jubilee of independence, or in the earlier exchange of messages between the two leaders on the occasion of Kuwait's liberation day celebrations, the facts, all the facts, point to the conclusion that bilateral relations between the two sides are on the mend. Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Al Ahmad Al Sabah said a few days ago that Jordan's embassy will soon reopen in Kuwait and that is yet another sign that Jordanian-Kuwaiti relations are improving.

When the developments on the Kuwait front are seen in conjunction with other positive improvements in relations between Jordan and the other Arab Gulf states, the conclusion is that our country's relations with these countries are moving, slowly but surely, in the right direction. Evidence of the positive change in Jordanian-Gulf relations can be also found in the visit to the country Sunday by a 65-member Saudi business delegation to boost trade between Riyadh and Amman.

But what needs to be stressed here is that the improvement of relations between Jordan and the Gulf states should not suffer a setback if the Kingdom's ties with Iraq witness a breakthrough. There is no mutual exclusivity between the two developments, especially that better relations between Amman and Baghdad will not come at the expense of the principles that the Kingdom has upheld in dealing with Iraq. And these are principles with which the Gulf states agree. The Gulf states welcomed the oil-for-food deal that Iraq reached with the U.N. just as Jordan did and the two sides are in agreement that Iraq should implement all United Nations resolutions and that the suffering of the Iraqi people should be alleviated.

Jordan has proven that it seeks normal ties with all Arab countries on the basis of mutual respect and relations that are based on commonality of interest. Improved inter-Arab ties should be an objective for all Arab countries because in the final analysis, the quest for better Arab relations serves the cause of Arabism and aims to quench the thirst of all the Arab peoples for one Arab nation that puts real Arab goals above narrow interests. With this in mind, we certainly welcome the full restoration of Jordanian-Gulf relations at the earliest possible time. We are certainly doing our part in this vein and we expect the others to reciprocate our words and deeds in a similar manner.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

THE JORDANIAN constitution authorises the King to extend the mandate of the present parliament for another one or two years, and there is a strong tendency on the part of key political figures in Jordan towards demanding an extension, said Bassam Emoush, a writer for *Al Ra'i* daily, Monday. While an extension will be in conformity with the country's constitution, it is far better for a new general election to be held in the coming year when the present mandate of the Lower House of parliament ends for the sake of enhancing the concept of democracy, said the writer. He said it is the right of Jordanian youth and qualified persons to be allowed the chance to contribute to the enactment of laws and help the government handle the country's political, social and economic affairs. Furthermore, the Jordanian political parties are not represented in the present house and new elections could offer the opportunity for many of them to take up seats in parliament and so enhance the concept of pluralism and democracy, added the writer. Indeed, the rapid moving developments in this region, he said, require a new parliament, capable of handling the different issues on the domestic and external fronts alike.

IN THE view of Taher Adwan, a writer for *Al Ra'i*, the Dead Sea could be a floating oil field for Jordan, requiring proper utilisation. Israel has been earning \$2 billion annually from the Dead Sea minerals, especially magnesium which is used in Germany's car manufacturing industry, while Jordan has been benefiting far less from the sea, extracting potash only, said the writer. He said that the German chancellor granted Israel \$100 million to help it continue extracting the mineral during his visit to that country last year, but he gave Jordan nothing, although the Dead Sea is a rich mine of different minerals shared by Jordan, Palestine and Israel. The writer said Jordan is in need of hotels and other resort facilities on the Dead Sea shores, but it also is in need of extracting the rich minerals of the sea and earn as much as Israel from this enterprise. He said the Dead Sea is a natural gift and should never be left for Israel alone to exploit its wealth.

The View from Fourth Circle

The next 50 years: From statehood to citizenship

By Rami G. Khouri

This week's 50th anniversary of Jordan's independence is an occasion for some serious, self-congratulatory backslapping, but also an opportunity for honest self-assessment. The balance sheet of Jordan's modern history is impressive. The substantial list of our achievements — from sheer survival in a rough neighbourhood to sustained human development, to today's evolving, modernising political culture — raises an important question that has not been sufficiently addressed, in my opinion: Do the developmental ways and means of the past half century offer a relevant blueprint for meeting the challenges of this and coming decades, i.e., what are our strengths that we can enhance, and our weaknesses that we can redress?

I would suggest the following pluses and minuses in a balance sheet of modern Jordan. On the plus side: we have survived as a state in the face of widespread early doubts about our durability and of repeated waves of regional demographic, political and economic shocks; we have seen the population of the state grow by nearly ten-fold, from less than half a million to some 4.2 million people, yet today nearly 100 per cent of Jordanians enjoy educational, health, housing and other basic social services of a reasonable, sometimes good, quality; we have endured the most profound impact of the Palestine-Zionism conflict, yet have persistently provided the Palestinian people with the most generous and humane package of services and opportunities to deal with their dilemma, including legal nationality; Jordan is widely respected by people throughout the Arab World and abroad for its sensible, centrist approach to nation-building, human development and respect for humanist values; and, Jordan is a noteworthy example of a traditional society experiencing modernisation and the adoption of new, more participatory political norms, while retaining many traditional strengths of family- and tribe-based cultures (most notably, a collective sense of solidarity and responsibility for the well-being of individuals).

On the minus side: we have yet to crystallise our identity within a regional context and to define our political, economic and demographic links with our wider Arab-Semitic hinterland (though this may be as much due to the region's turbulence as to ourselves); our survival, viability and progress remain very dependent on foreign sources of money and political goodwill (our traditional reliance on foreign aid grants is now replaced by a more modern yet equally vulnerable recurring dependence on foreign debt rescheduling and private foreign investment); we have not been able to meaningfully shake society's heavy dependence on the state as the primary source of power,

protection, ideology, money, ideas, employment, infrastructure and other aspects of modern statehood that are shared by the private and public sectors in more advanced societies; we have not adequately come to terms with the implications of the fact that so many Jordanians of Palestinian origin feel loyalty to and love for both Jordan and Palestine; and we have not yet found that credible combination of traditional values and modern structures that allows us to forge a more participatory political system based as much on enduring civil institutions as on individuals at the national, tribal or local levels.

This cursory analysis suggests to me that as we celebrate our 50th anniversary of independence, we should recognise what is happening in Jordan: we are seeing our challenges shift from the level of the state, the region and the tribe, to the level of the family, the community and the individual. Stated another way, our main challenge today is not that of nation-building in a traditional society, but rather that of coming to terms with the full implications of citizenship in a modern state.

Our many impressive achievements in recent decades have been largely motivated, orchestrated and financed by the state, which has elicited an enthusiastic and positive response from its citizens. The achievements that we must work for from now on, however, cannot be attained by the state: they must be achieved by people working in directions and configurations very different from the dominant state structures of the recent past.

The achievements and goals I have in mind include a more vibrant, creative and sustainable economy; a more formidable ethic of protection of our natural and cultural heritage; greater transparency, participation and accountability in our political decision-making systems; and a modernisation of the tribal structure so that it can adequately address the dimensions of contemporary challenges in areas such as employment, poverty and gender equity.

The state has legitimate regulatory and promotion roles in these spheres, but the real work must be done by individuals and groups scattered throughout every corner of our society. The new emphasis on the role of individuals and the private realm as the engine of national progress demands that we deal with the reality of tribal strengths. The reemergence of tribalism as a most powerful, meaningful and enduring form of identity in Jordan raises the important question of the relationship among tribal, individual and state identities — as well as the related roles of other active identities in our society, such as Islam, Arabism and ethnic/religious minorities (Circas-

sians, Armenians, Druze, Christians, etc.). This will be further complicated by our need to figure into this equation two other demographic factors: Palestinians and Israelis, both of whom will have an important impact on Jordan's future.

The history of modern Jordan shows that we have successfully absorbed such challenges, mainly because of three factors: a) the non-ideological nature of society and its focus on meeting basic human material needs; b) the concentration of all forms of power in the hands of the state and, c) the compassionate, values-driven nature of our leadership. The continuity of the political leadership in the form of the monarchy will always provide a steady hand at the rudder, but the imminent changes in the first two factors will require a new set of priorities and principles to guide the development of our country and people in the second half of this inaugural Jordanian century.

The relaxation of the state's monopoly on power, combined with the emergence of stronger private, civil and community institutions within a more participatory political culture, will mark the shift in modern Jordanian history from the era of the dominant, cash-importing state to the era of the dynamic, goods-exporting society. As we make this historic, exciting transition, we have a powerful base of social assets and communal values to build upon, primarily defined by protective ancient concepts of family and tribe. These must adapt and prove themselves as credible, durable, equitable forms within a modern, urbanised, monetised society, or else fade away and give way to the Western-style individualistic consumer society that is spreading around the world from its North Atlantic base.

The redefinition and modernisation of family and tribe within a contemporary state that is itself being redefined and modernised will now force us to address the issue of citizenship in a most serious manner — one that goes beyond the definition of citizenship primarily as allegiance, and sees citizenship in the wider terms of rights, responsibilities and opportunities that are naturally and freely negotiated between the citizen and the state.

Perhaps Jordan's greatest achievement since its independence 50 years ago is this: it can address this modern challenge of durable, humane statehood because its formative years of nation-building have given it a social, political and economic base that is conducive to change through civilised dialogue and peaceful transition, on the basis of the rule of the majority and the protection of the rights of the minority.

Netanyahu won debate, most Israeli analysts say

By Howard Goller
Reuter

JERUSALEM — Benjamin Netanyahu turned his mastery of television to his advantage, playing on voters' security fears to beat Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres in their only campaign debate, most analysts said Monday.

Newspaper and radio commentators gave the edge to the Likud Party's 46-year-old Netanyahu, a relative political newcomer, but two opinion polls differed on who won Sunday's 30-minute televised confrontation.

With two days to go until the elections, the analysts said the U.S.-educated Netanyahu — coached by an American expert — was far more assertive than Mr. Peres, the 72-year-old Labour Party veteran of Israeli elections.

They said Mr. Peres came across as sad-faced and lifeless, especially against an all-black studio backdrop in a format with a moderator which allowed for little engagement between the two candidates.

"As an actor, there's no comparison. Netanyahu beat Peres in a knockout," TV reviewer and playwright Meir Shritzer said. Even some experts in body language favoured Mr. Netanyahu's performance.

Mr. Netanyahu romanced the camera, showing skills he developed as Israel's verbal prizefighter during the 1991 Gulf war when he donned a gas mask on CNN Television while Iraqi scud missiles fell.

In a poll for the newspaper *Maariv* which asked who was more convincing, Mr. Peres came out four percentage points ahead. Netanyahu was out front by the same margin in another poll for the daily *Yedioth Ahronoth*.

"It seems to me Netanyahu won yesterday; he won on the fronts he understands. For most of the debate he looked more aggressive. He directed his gaze at the right camera. With the help of his American coach, he repeated his campaign message with the persistence of a Japanese

robot," commentator Nahum Barnea wrote in *Yedioth Ahronoth*, Israel's biggest daily.

"He won because he put all of his verbal force into one card: fear," Mr. Barnea said.

During the debate Mr. Netanyahu had said Israeli children feared riding buses after the suicide bombings and accused Mr. Peres of

allowing the security situation to hit rock bottom. A count by the newspaper showed the Likud leader used the word "fear" 11 times.

It also showed that Mr. Netanyahu used the pronoun "I" 66 times — three times as often as Mr. Peres. Commentator Sima Kadmon wrote in a front-page analysis for *Maariv* that Mr. Netanyahu squeezed every drop from his mere appearance in the same setting with Mr. Peres.

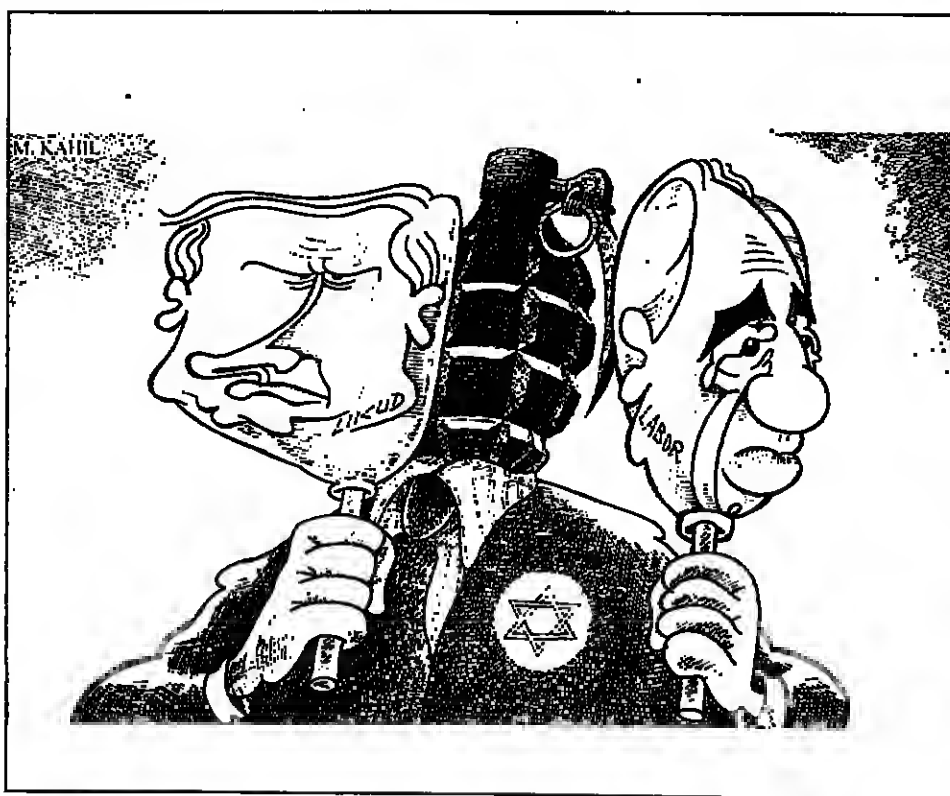
Labour's campaign, playing up Mr. Peres' half century in politics, had insisted that Mr. Netanyahu was simply not prime ministerial material.

In the end she wrote that voters opposed to Mr. Peres saw in him "a sad-faced pensioner thrust against his

will into the company of somebody he doesn't like."

Meanwhile anyone who opposed Mr. Netanyahu would go on viewing him as "a salesman who looks you in the eye and sells you a product that has never been tried," she wrote.

Yedioth Ahronoth's diplomatic correspondent Shimon Shifter blamed Mr. Peres' advisers for urging



The debate was seen as important because of the closeness of the election crucial to the future of Middle East peace. It is also Israel's first in which voters will directly elect a prime minister.

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LETTERS

Learning never stops

To the Editor:

I READ with interest the letter by Paul Saint ("Bridging the generation gap", *Jordan Times* May 21, 1996).

I remember how bored I used to get sometimes at school when forced to take subjects in which I had no interest. So when the Open University came along, I enrolled and obtained my degree in subjects which interested me. I continued taking courses even though I was working abroad. My colleagues in the programme were experienced in the particular field as were our tutors. Our learning was not only from books as is the basis of academia. Universities in the U.K. are learning that they are not the fount of all knowledge gained from reading books which anyway become obsolete very quickly.

There are many local centres of education now developing part-time courses in many subjects and they are being supported by people of both sexes and all ages so that, as Paul Saint says, the generation gap is bridged. This is the case in my own University in England. As Margaret Mead, the renowned anthropologist said: "In today's world no one's education is ever finished."

Barbara Johnston,
Amman.Image-making
'sacrifices'

To the Editor:

As a Swiss citizen in Jordan, I am proud to see progress being achieved in this country in many ways. I am particularly interested in the advancement of tourism. I order to cultivate and promote tourism, the image of Jordan is crucial.

Recently, however, I was disappointed to observe certain behaviour which I know is related to a sensitive issue. What I am referring to is the practice of slaughtering sheep for Eid Al Adha. I am not questioning this practice. Rather, I am questioning the method in which it has been carried out.

First, as Amman is the capital city of this country, I was shocked to see herds of sheep parading throughout the main city streets and highways. Second, the practice of slaughtering sheep in public is unhygienic and unpleasant, especially for tourists and for many of the residents in Jordan, but mainly, it goes against the teachings of Islam which calls for humane methods of slaughtering animals, with minimal pain and suffering.

I would suggest that animals be slaughtered in proper slaughter houses for all the reasons mentioned above. It will help the image of the country as well.

Corinne Villa,
Amman.

The Jordan Times welcomes letters and contributions from its readers on any subject they wish to tackle. Letters intended for publication, however, should contain the writer's full name and preferably address as well. Names can be withheld only upon request and under special circumstances. Letters are subject to editing. The newspaper is not responsible for the return of unused manuscripts.

U.S. implicitly supports Peres

WASHINGTON (AP) — The Clinton administration's position on this week's Israeli elections comes down to this: steer away from openly endorsing Shimon Peres but make clear U.S. backing for his policies.

"Now is not the time to turn back," President Bill Clinton said last week in remarks he directed to "the people of Israel."

Unspoken but implied was the administration's belief that a victory Wednesday for Benjamin Netanyahu, Mr. Peres' challenger in the contest for prime minister, could result in turning back from the peace process.

"We don't look at Netanyahu the man; we look at what policies he is supporting in the region," said a White House official, speaking on condition of anonymity.

In the Israeli contest, the differences in policies are clear. Edward Djerejian, who served as U.S. ambassador to Syria and later to Israel, said the Middle East peace process "is virtually on hold until May 29. I think these elections will open up a new chapter in the process no matter which way they go."

He predicted that if the incumbent Peres and the Labour Party are victorious "the negotiations will be resumed as soon as possible on the Palestinian and Syrian tracks."

A victory by Mr. Netanyahu and the Likud Party would mean that there is "no question the pace will slacken," Mr. Djerejian said.

The peace process moves on several tracks involving Israel and its former adversaries.

Jordan and Israel have signed a peace agreement and established diplomatic relations, a situation Mr. Netanyahu and the Likud Party do not challenge.

Israel has granted the Palestinians autonomy in Gaza and parts of the West Bank.

But difficult issues remain for so-called final status negotiations including the status of Jerusalem, which Israel claims as its capital. The Palestinians also want the city to be the capital of an independent Palestinian state.

Americans stupid, Britons from Mars, Qadhafi tells Cairo student audience

CAIRO (AFP) — Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi drew peals of laughter from Egyptian university students and professors as he regaled them in a speech about "stupid" Americans and "Englishmen from Mars" on Monday.

In a small conference hall at Cairo University, an effusive Qadhafi in brown robes and a white turban addressed around 200 students and teachers, along with Egyptian Education Minister Hussein Kamel Bahaddin.

Among Colonel Qadhafi's personal security were four women bodyguards, three in bandana masks, jeans and T-shirts led by the formidable Colonel Fatima in desert commando fatigues who was armed with a machine-gun and heavy make-up.

The Libyan leader started off with jabs at Britain and the United States, who demand the extradition of two Libyan suspects in the 1988 bombing of a U.S. passenger jet over Lockerbie, Scotland that left 270 dead.

The Lockerbie crisis, which has left Libya under U.N. sanctions since 1992, will be "difficult to resolve" because "the British are among the most isolated and ignorant people in the world, as are the Americans," Col. Qadhafi said.

"The British are narrow-minded and understand nothing. If you talk to one, you find out you're talking to some guy who just arrived from the planet Mars," he quipped.

Americans "attack us 24

"One could expect at least a pause and a policy assessment by a Likud government before deciding... how to initiate final status negotiations with the Palestinian National Authority (PNA)," said Mr. Djerejian.

The former ambassador also pointed out that a complicating factor in assessing the potential impact of the elections is that Israel voters will elect a prime minister directly for the first time and cast a separate ballot for members of the Israeli parliament.

That opens the possibility of divided government along the lines of the situation in Washington — an executive of one party having to deal with a legislature controlled by the opposition.

One oddity of the U.S. view of the contenders for prime minister is that the one that makes the administration more nervous is the more "American" of the two. Mr. Netanyahu spent his teenage years in Philadelphia and then after a stint in the Israeli army returned to the United States and studied architecture and business administration at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, from which he graduated in 1975.

The Likud leader has said he would recommend that "we start negotiations with Syria on a series of agreements which will be good for us and them in the spheres of security."

Secretary of State Warren Christopher has been sounding noticeably more pessimistic about prospects for an early agreement between Israel and Syria.

Talking about Syrian President Hafez Al Assad, Mr. Christopher said this month that he was "more concerned than ever as to whether he will be able to execute his intention (for peace) because of his suspicion and fear."

The White House official said Mr. Christopher's pessimism was calculated.

"He is sending a message to the region and specifically to Syria that if the Syrians want to benefit from the fruits of peace they need to support the principles that are associated with future peace negotiations," the official said. "If they don't they are at risk of being isolated."

Shimon Peres dreams of realising a dream

By Howard Goller
Reuters

TEL AVIV — He has hammered visions of a new Middle East into peace deals, defying cynical Israelis who have tagged him a dreamer during a political career spanning more than half a century.

On Wednesday, Prime Minister Shimon Peres is hoping finally to realise another dream — and win his first Israeli election in five tries.

Born in Poland, Mr. Peres was 11 when he arrived in British-run Palestine. Israel's founder David Ben-Gurion groomed him for leadership.

He rose from overseeing arms purchases and manpower in the Hagana army before Israel's founding in 1948 to become prime minister twice.

Now 72, Mr. Peres has had a long history of flops on Israel's political stage. Four times — in 1977, 1981, 1984 and 1988 — he failed to win a national election outright. It was

only under an unusual power-sharing arrangement with Likud that Mr. Peres did his first turn as prime minister.

The second time began in November when as foreign minister he took over from his longtime Labour Party rival Yitzhak Rabin, assassinated by a right-wing Jew opposed to peace moves.

Mr. Peres has held every top cabinet job. As foreign minister in 1994 he shared the Nobel Peace Prize with Mr. Rabin and Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat for their breakthrough accord in 1993.

When Yigal Amir shot the 73-year-old Rabin dead after a Tel Aviv peace rally, the torch was passed to Mr. Peres who vowed to forge the peace with Syria, Lebanon and other Arab states that eluded his predecessor.

Opinion polls showed him way ahead of the hard-line Likud Party opposition leader Benjamin Netanyahu but some analysts ascribed much of the support for Mr. Peres to sympathy for Mr. Rabin, his slain colleague.

Four Islamic suicide bombings that killed 59 people over nine days in February and March sent Mr. Peres' popularity plummeting. Israelis blamed him for thinking he could make peace with Palestinians.

Mr. Peres was popular in his first turn as prime minister from 1984 to 1986. He pulled Israeli troops back from Lebanon, normalised relations with Egypt and slashed inflation from 445 per cent a year to below 20 per cent.

But failed bids to win elections, weld coalitions and garner support for secret peace plans have given him a reputation as a loser and a schemer over the years. A legendary rivalry with Mr. Rabin, his peer, only made things worse.

Though an articulate if uninspiring speaker and a diplomat whose skills make him a welcome visitor in most countries, Mr. Peres has long seemed out of place on Israel's political stage.

His visions of a new and flourishing Middle East

seemed no more than a far-away dream. He appeared better suited to academia than politics. He published several books, including one after the peace deal on his vision of a new Middle East.

But an opinion poll at one point found him to be the most hated man in Israel.

Tireless in his pursuit of peace and political success, Mr. Peres said he averaged three to four hours of sleep a night though he would have liked five. Vacations simply were not part of his culture, he said.

After Mr. Rabin's death, Mr. Peres reached out across the divide underscored by the assassination, urging Israelis for and against the government's peace moves to work with him to bring their society together.

He promised that despite peace deals with the Palestinians, his government would not ignore the "feeling of distress" among the 130,000 Jewish settlers of the occupied lands who had complained Mr. Rabin was abandoning them.

He has had 15 years of experience in the Defence Ministry and is widely regarded as the man who gave Israel nuclear capabilities by procuring the secret Dimona reactor from France.

But some Israelis fear he lacks the toughness of Mr. Rabin, a former army chief, to stand up to enemies and guard their security while making peace. Mr. Peres' experience was after all in the political arena not on the battlefield.

With an eye to boosting his government's security credentials, Mr. Peres has made himself defence minister as had Mr. Rabin before him and appointed army chief-turned-politician Ehud Barak his foreign minister.

The discovery that Mr. Peres and Rabin collaborated to clinch peace with the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) in 1993 was as surprising as the secret PLO deal itself.

In his autobiography years ago, Rabin called Mr. Peres "an indefatigable schemer."

In the last election in

1992 Mr. Rabin seized the Labour Party from Mr. Peres and led it to a decisive victory. Still, Mr. Rabin could not ignore Mr. Peres or his years of experience, grudgingly making him foreign minister.

Somehow, in the last years of Rabin's life, the two Israeli leaders found a way to "make peace with each other and history with the PLO and Jordan. Israel signed a peace treaty with Jordan in 1994."

Minutes before his assassination, Mr. Rabin stood at the rally with his arm tightly around Mr. Peres' waist. "you see," Mr. Rabin told reporters. "Things change not only in the world but also in the Middle East — also for us."

"We are hugging for peace," Mr. Peres added. When only a short time later Mr. Peres assumed the reins of power, he mourned the slain Mr. Rabin as "a friend, a partner, a leader."

'Bibi' Netanyahu could be Israel's 'comeback kid'

By Howard Goller
Reuters

TEL AVIV — Benjamin "Bibi" Netanyahu aims on Wednesday to become Israel's comeback kid.

Campaigning to slow Middle East peace moves, the 46-year-old Likud Party leader hopes to defeat elder statesman Shimon Peres, 72, and become Israel's youngest ever prime minister.

"Victory is within our grasp," he said in the final days of the campaign. "We made a fantastic transformation compared to our situation five or six months ago when we were considered a political corpse."

Only last November, Mr. Netanyahu faced accusations that he had fostered the climate of extremism that led to the killing of Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin.

He trailed Mr. Peres in opinion polls by more than 20 percentage points.

Then suicide bombers killed 59 people in four attacks in February and March, wiping out Mr. Peres' lead.

Mr. Netanyahu kept his

mouth shut this time while Mr. Peres' lead hovered at an uncomfortable five per cent.

In a country where the prime minister is often a grandfather or a grandmother, Mr. Peres' Labour Party backers assailed Mr. Netanyahu as inexperienced.

His mastery of TV soundbites left him open also to accusations of being shallow.

"I'm not going to deal with that," retorts Mr. Netanyahu. "People can read my books, my speeches... They can decide."

Educated in the United States, Mr. Netanyahu has run a tough American-style campaign, hammering away at what he contends is his opponent's weaknesses negotiating with the Arabs.

He has seized on the suicide bombings more recently as proof that Mr. Peres has wrongly put his trust in the Palestinians to make peace.

Likud rules out further concessions to Palestinians, offering only the limited self-rule they already have.

Mr. Netanyahu promises to expand Jewish settlement in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip — a policy that puts him on a collision course with Israel's Arab peace partners and Washington, Israel's closest ally.

And he opposes plans by Mr. Peres to swap land for peace with Syria.

If elected, Mr. Netanyahu may well find his political options constrained by hardliners in his cabinet such as Ariel Sharon, the former defence minister who led Israel's 1982 invasion of Lebanon.

Ambitious, Mr. Netanyahu may yet prove to be full of surprises.

He had said he would refuse to meet Israel's peace partner Yasser Arafat. But last month, in a bid for floating voters, he promised to consider meeting the Palestinian president if elected.

In 1990 Mr. Netanyahu's mouth got him into trouble with the United States amid tensions over peace moves.

Then Secretary of State James Baker banned Mr. Netanyahu from the State Department for saying U.S.

Middle East policies were based on "distortions and lies."

They later mended relations, Mr. Baker said.

An admission of adultery seems to have cost Mr. Netanyahu little.

In the 1993 scandal known as "hibigate," a mixture of sex, lies and videotape, Mr. Netanyahu admitted cheating on his wife Sarah. But he patched it up with the wife — his third — and the voters.

His stocky build and square-jawed looks earned him the title of Israel's sexiest politician in one opinion poll.

A former commando leader, Mr. Netanyahu took a single-minded campaign against extremism into the United Nations, where he served as Israel's ambassador from 1984-88, and later into Israeli politics. He wrote a book about terrorism.

His TV skills made him the Likud government's champion of the airwaves in the 1991 Gulf war and again later that year in Madrid where the Middle East peace process was launched.

As Scud missiles fell on Israel during the Gulf war he donned a gas mask live on TV amid fears of an Iraqi chemical attack. In Madrid, he locked horns with Arab journalists.

"Television is not the reflection of reality. It directs the reality," he once said.

Mr. Netanyahu is only the third leader of Likud after former Jewish underground leaders Menachem Begin and Yitzhak Shamir. Mr. Rabin ousted Mr. Shamir in the last election in 1992, and Mr. Netanyahu was chosen to lead Likud.

"The fact is, and this is very important, Mr. Netanyahu was the one who succeeded to take a political party after a real clear breakdown and he built (it back up)," said Shimon Shiffer, diplomatic correspondent for Israel's biggest daily Yedioth Ahronoth.

Mr. Netanyahu has the ideal pedigree for an Israeli politician.

Born in Tel Aviv to an eminent historian, he served in an elite army commando unit from 1967

to 1972 and was promoted to captain for service in the 1973 Middle East war.

Mr. Netanyahu was shot and wounded in the face when he led commandos disguised as airport workers onto a commandeered Sabena airliner in May 1972.

He returned from architecture and business studies in the United States in the mid-1970s and was introduced to Moshe Arens, a Likud parliamentarian who became his mentor.

After a period in private business, he served as a diplomat in the Israeli embassy in Washington, initially under Mr. Arens, until he was appointed U.N. ambassador in 1984.

His brother Jonathan died in action leading the 1976 Israeli raid on Entebbe airport in Uganda to free Israeli hostages on an Air France plane.

Mr. Netanyahu said he was nicknamed Bibi "because I had a cousin who was Benjamin B. — an older cousin. He was B.B. He was the big B.B. — he was a very big guy... I was the small B.B."

Amman summit could be larger

(Continued from page 1)

and Palestinian leaders.

"Jordan has always advocated collective Arab action and always welcomed all consultations among Arab leaders to serve the common interests of the Arabs," said an official.

"Jordan welcomes any expansion of the summit here next month to include other Arab leaders. This would be a very positive development for common Arab interests."

One of the key objectives of an expanded Arab summit in Amman would be to seek to strengthen the Palestinian position in the final status negotiations with Israel and to revive the stagnant Syrian and Lebanese peace talks with Israel.

Also reviewed would be a common Arab position to interact with the developments in the region in the wake of the breakthroughs in the Arab-Israeli peace process.

Turks visit Iraq for oil talks

(Continued from page 1)

It said "France obtained a ceasefire ending Israeli aggression" in Lebanon in April, helped end the war in Bosnia, and encouraged Yemen and Eritrea to agree last week to arbitration to resolve their dispute over Red Sea islands.

The prediction of President Saddam Hussein, who since the 1970s never stopped repeating the need for the emergence of a new balance of power in the world, came true," the daily said.

"But it would be a lifting of the embargo against Iraq which would be a dazzling success for French diplomacy and would allow it to demon-

strate its autonomy in the face of American hegemony in the world," it said.

"The French understand perfectly Iraq's importance in the region and the interest they can obtain from a privileged relationship with Iraq," it added.

"The French initiative we're waiting for right now is the lifting of the oil embargo and such an initiative backed particularly by Russia will make France a factor for redistributing power in the world," it said.

France and Russia support easing the sanctions imposed on Iraq.

Rightists win Cypriot elections

(Continued from page 1)

pounding drums and setting off flares.

But leaders of the other parties also claimed they had triumphed and all morning newspapers — from the radical right to the left — proclaimed victory in banner headlines.

DISY President Yiannakis Masisis told supporters: "The result is a triumph for DISY. We are the first party and shall remain the first party."

Election officials reported a turnout of 93 per cent among the 449,672 registered voters. Voting was compulsory.



PERES GETS YOUTHFUL SUPPORT: Israeli Prime Minister Shimon Peres receives youthful support at a campaign rally Monday, two days before national elections which opinion polls show is too close to call. Mr. Peres has featured Israeli youth in campaign commercials as part of his message of striving to achieve peace for the next generation (Reuters photo)

Israeli elections too close to call

(Continued from page 1)

Peres had 49.5 per cent and Mr. Netanyahu 47.1 per cent, down from 51 per cent for Mr. Peres and 45 per cent for the Likud leader before.

Those not expressing a favourite fell from four per cent to 3.4 per cent. The poll had a margin of error of three per cent, leaving the outcome of the Wednesday vote too close to call.

A second poll of 583 voters

for the same newspaper put Mr. Peres' support at 50.5 per cent versus Mr. Netanyahu's 46.5 per cent, compared with 50.3 per cent for Mr. Peres and 45.8 per cent for Mr. Netanyahu previously.

An ultra-religious party said that despite supporting Mr. Netanyahu for prime minister, it would not rule out joining a Peres-led coalition.

Yeltsin, Chelens sign truce

(Continued from page 1)

republic overnight. One Russian serviceman was wounded when he stepped on a mine, ITAR-TASS said.

Russian military leaders have been cool to the idea of talks, and new Russian offensives were reported in recent days around the rebel strongholds of Vedeno, Shatoi and the key village of Bamot.

Mr. Yandarbiyev's team includes Akhmed Zakayev,

the rebels' commander of the key southwest front, and the rebels' former chief negotiator, Khozhakhmed Yarikhanov, among others.

The leader of the Russian-backed Chechen government, Doku Zavgayev, also attended. The rebels in the past refused to meet with Mr. Zavgayev, but were willing to view him as a member of the Russian delegation.

Experts see pressing need for regional solution to water deficit in Mideast

By Francesca Ciriaci
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN - Jordan's high population growth rate and the ongoing industrialisation development make solutions to water scarcity more and more pressing and show that the need for "water security" and for self-sufficiency in commodities is highly imperative.

"To meet the increasing demand, the Kingdom is already importing 82 per cent of the national need of wheat, and, by the year 2001, it will have to import at least 88 per cent of the internal demand," considerably increasing its foreign debt, economic advisor Salem Bouras said Monday at an international conference on "the Jordanian economy in its regional and international framework: A future outlook."

Analysing the reasons of the country's water deficit and insufficient agricultural production, participants in a session dedicated to the likely impact of regional developments on the water and agriculture sectors in Jordan called for immediate measures at the local and regional level.

Despite the Arab-Israeli peace process, "the water situation is far from being settled," Water Minister Samir Kawar, moderator of the debate, pointed out.

"In the Middle East, security means water security, and water security is the only way to achieve peace," advisor of the Ministry of Water, Hani Abu Nijaj, said.

Especially in considera-

tion of Jordan's high population growth rate, registered at 3.6 per cent last year, and industrial growth, "the gap between water demand and water supply will become deeper and deeper," he said, "and the quantity of water available in the region is not sufficient to cover the growing needs."

Mr. Abu Nijaj blamed the "institutions and agencies in charge of water distribution" for "being detached from reality," and increasing the gap between water supply and water demand.

To defeat the water deficit, Mr. Abu Nijaj emphasised the need for clear water planning, updating of regulations and awareness campaigns to educate the public on the importance of saving water, but also said that "domestic measures are not enough," and stressed the need for "serious regional cooperation."

Sharing the same water basin, Jordan, Palestine, Syria, Lebanon and Israel should set up a special regional body to regulate and supervise each country's use of water.

"Regional cooperation should be based on the principle of equal benefits," according to which a country's sovereignty is not absolute and dry lands should have priority over wet lands and each country must avoid damaging the water basin it shares with other countries, Mr. Abu Nijaj said.

Warning against the risk of pollution of Middle East waters, Mr. Abu Nijaj also said positive regional coop-

eration between countries sharing a same water basin must be supported by "international financial and technical assistance, to ensure water security."

Though identifying scarcity of water and fertile arable land as the main causes of Jordan's poor agricultural production, Dr. Boutros, who also represented the Arab Society for Agricultural Sciences at the conference, stressed the negative effects of lack of investment and technology and discrepancies between policies and laws on Jordan's agriculture.

"The fact that we exploit four million dunums of land, while we could very easily exploit five million, is very grave," he said.

"Agricultural families have abandoned agriculture, creating a dependence on unsteady foreign labour and causing a loss of expertise, with consequent deteriorating performances," he added.

Furthermore, according to a joint Syrian-Jordanian study carried out in the Ghor region, "94 per cent of farmers do not resort to agricultural guidance, even when provided," Dr. Boutros said.

He also pointed to the influence of world economic cycles on the Jordanian national economy, following the ongoing process of economic globalisation.

"The prices of sugar and rice, commodities which Jordan does not produce but consume in great quantities, for instance," he said, "are expected to go up worldwide."

IMF prepares plans to cut debt of poorest African countries

BORDEAUX, France (AFP) — The International Monetary Fund (IMF) is working on a scheme to reduce debt owed by the poorest countries in Africa, the director general of the fund, Michel Camdessus, has said.

The IMF would make proposals by the autumn to reduce these debts to a level "compatible with development," he said. He told a press conference at a Europe-Africa convention here that "for about 20 countries the debt remains unbearable

even if the Club of Paris (of state creditors) has gradually accepted the principle of a reduction."

He said: "If these countries adopted responsible policies for management of their economies and of structural investment for a fairly long period, all of the creditors would agree to make a major effort so that at the end of a probationary period, the debt ratios would be reduced to an acceptable level, compatible with development."

But many other problems

remained if these countries were to develop.

Earlier, in an interview with the regional newspaper Sud-Ouest, he said that "Africa is doing better." In 1995 forty countries had achieved growth of more than five per cent. In 1994 the number had been 20. "This rate should continue during the next three years," he said. But "Africa is threatened particularly by globalisation because it is being marginalised by the great flows of international trade."

U.S. House passes increase in minimum wage

WASHINGTON (AFP) — The House of Representatives has defied its Republican leadership and approved an increase in the minimum wage covering all U.S. workers, giving Democrats and President Bill Clinton a much needed victory.

The 90 cent increase would bring the U.S. minimum wage from \$4.25 to \$5.15 an hour by July 1997. The bill still faces a vote in the Senate.

In what is considered a major victory for the Democrats and Mr. Clinton, the House passed the increase in a 281-144 vote after Mr. Clinton vowed to veto any bill sent him that included an amendment excluding many workers from the minimum wage.

The vote came few days after House Democrats and Republicans passed a temporary repeal of a 4.3 cents a gallon tax hike on gasoline that Mr. Clinton imposed in 1993 as part of his deficit-reduction plan. The repeal also awaits Senate action.

Moderate Republicans joined Democrats in opposing the amendment, which would have exempted

businesses that gross less than \$500,000 a year from the minimum wage.

Mr. Clinton had said the amendment would have killed the minimum wage for up to 10 million workers and would have given rise to sweatshops.

"A bipartisan majority rejected the effort of the Republican leadership and recognised that raising the minimum wage is the right thing to do," Mr. Clinton said after the vote. "You can't raise a family on \$4.25 an hour."

He called the Republican amendment a "hoax (that) would actually have meant lower wages and even the return to sweatshop conditions."

By adopting a higher minimum wage, "give people the hope and opportunity to work and at least have enough money to almost live in dignity," Democratic representative Sam Gejdenson exhorted his colleagues during floor debate.

Republicans argued Democratic representative Pat Schroeder, are "trying to pretend they give you the minimum wage while they

turn around and knock out two-thirds of the businesses in America from having to pay either the minimum wage or overtime."

Republican representative Bill Goodling led the debate in favour of the failed amendment. He said Democrats opposed his amendment because they had a "tremendous hate passion in (their) relationship with small business."

Republicans said minimum wage jobs are often the entry-point to higher paying jobs and warned of private-sector layoffs if the wage were raised. They also said Democrats were cozying up with labour unions in order to receive union campaign contributions.

But in the end, 77 Republicans voted in favour of increasing the minimum wage without the amendment — one that a Democratic leader had branded a "poison pill."

Democrats have portrayed the Republican Congress as extremist and out of touch with working people — a strategy that has made some Republicans sensitive and

fearful of a voter backlash in November.

"The Republican Party is on the wrong side of a fundamental issue that people clearly understand," said Texas representative Martin Frost, who chairs the Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee.

"This one is one of the defining moments of the '96 election campaign for control of the House of Representatives," Mr. Frost said.

In 1992, the Republicans took control of both houses of Congress for the first time in four decades.

Supporters of a minimum-wage increase say the current \$4.25 minimum wage has the lowest purchasing power in 40 years.

The Centre on Budget and Policy Priorities noted that raising it to \$5.15 an hour "would make up only half the ground that was lost to inflation during the 1980s," it said in a statement.

A worker earning the minimum wage makes \$8,840 a year — just above the 1995 U.S. poverty level of \$7,761 for one person.

Yemen president urges more economic reform

SANAA (R) — Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh has urged the government of his impoverished country to press on with painful economic reforms, which he said had already begun to bear fruit.

"This programme represents a national necessity. It is the true path to heal the economic and administrative situation, despite the difficulties which took place at the beginning of its implementation," Mr. Saleh said.

"On this occasion I urge the government to press on with the economic, financial and administrative reform programme."

"Positive economic indicators of implementing the programme have begun to appear by suspending economic deterioration," Mr. Saleh said.

He gave no figures but said some promising signs were bringing down the budget deficit and inflation.

Yemen's 1996 forecast 25 billion riyals budget deficit fell from 36 billion riyals in 1995.

Yemen has raised prices for fuel and electricity, water, and telephone rates as part of its economic reform programme.

Last year such measures sparked short-lived riots.

THE BETTER HALF By Glasbergen

The Natural choice

D A JANI Diamonds jewelry

Amra Forum Hotel Shops. 6th Circle.

JUMBLE THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME by Henri Arnold and Mike Argiron

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

WULFA
NOFET
TESACK
WHENEP

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Answers tomorrow

Yesterday's Jumbles: KNACK PRINT GOATIE DIVIDE
Answer: What the park turned into during lunch time — A GARDEN OF EATIN'

THE Daily Crossword by Kenneth Witte

ACROSS

- Prepare to travel
- Food fish
- Biblical prophet
- Lotion ingredient
- Forearm bone
- Greek letter
- Fr. novelist, Pierre
- Muddy road signs
- Granted
- Pressure (someone)
- Spud state
- Makes whole
- "NYPD Blue" alert
- London district
- US memoirist, Helen
- Aves.
- Cabal actions
- TV's Chase
- Pressure (someone)
- Woodwind
- Artist Max
- Seine
- Super Bowl XXX champ
- Vendetta
- Native sult
- Type of run
- Seashore sight
- Pressure (someone)
- NZ native
- Gordie, of NHL
- lame
- Singer Tennille
- Be of use
- Humdringer
- Radiate
- Burnell or Channing
- Novitiate
- Irae

DOWN

- Insect feelers
- So as to be heard
- Terra
- Carradine and Williams
- Trustworthy
- Locker room
- Loosen laces
- Rigatoni
- Witty
- Aupury
- Actor Beatty
- Mature
- Possessed
- White lightning
- BPOE member
- Woody
- Tea type
- Wild goose
- Weed
- A Taylor
- Fine china
- Polka
- instruments
- Long scarf
- Alphabet run
- Stale (Kansas)
- Aviv
- Compass pl.
- Musical study
- When one wishes
- Lanka
- Did housework
- "Strike while the iron"
- Muscular weakness
- A Judd
- Cubs' great
- Banks
- Actor on 25A
- Sextet halved
- Pianist Peter
- Singer Davis
- A Gardner
- Scul

Peanuts

I CAN'T MEMORIZE THESE POEMS! I CAN'T EVEN UNDERSTAND THEM!

JUST TRY TO GO ALONG WITH THE WORDS, SIR...

YOU'RE LETTING THEM OVERWHELM YOU...

JUST REMEMBER... POEMS ARE WRITTEN BY REAL PEOPLE...

HOW REAL?

Andy Capp

IT WAS A LOVELY WEDDING, BUT I CRIED MY EYES OUT

WEDDINGS CAN BE VERY EMOTIONAL EVENTS, DEAR...

EVEN ANDY WAS QUITE BROKEN UP AT OUR WEDDING...

I'D KILLED HIM THAT MY MUM WAS COMING TO LIVE WITH US

ENJOYING YOURSELF?

Mutt'n'Jeff

WHAT A TIME FOR A FIRE! JUST WHEN I'M HUNGRY AND WE'RE GETTING READY TO EAT!

WELL, WE VOLUNTEERED!

FINE MEATS

KNIFE MAN BOY!

FINE MEATS

MEDIUM RARE!

HOROSCOPE FORECAST FOR TUESDAY, MAY 28, 1996

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Get into the business world early today and you should listen to what an expert has to suggest, and then you can follow this advice for if you do so you will discover some secret of his or her success.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Get busy today and pursue your career activities without fear of reprisal, and don't permit a pessimistic individual from the desired progress which you have been seeking for sometime. This is a good day for some recreations.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) If you listen to the advice of a good close friend who has your best interests at heart you will not go wrong if you follow his or her suggestions, thereby you will see that you will improve your life considerably.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Join a group of fellow business associates today in some new project which can be very profitable to you all at this time. Use tact in how you conduct your career activities tonight and everything will go well for you.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) One in a high position of authority will take note of your fine efforts you expend today, and you could easily gain many of the benefits which can be expended by this individual. Take it easy tonight with your loved ones.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) You can expand your horizons today since the planets are in a favourable position in your celestial construction and you can add to your present career activities which are worthwhile for you in the days ahead.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Don't permit a fellow associate to take up too much of your valuable time today and you then solve some family affair very easily to the satisfaction of all those who reside under your roof.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Go with a fellow associate and a creative friend to a place where you can discuss an important project and receive the necessary assistance which will be needed for the completion of this project.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) You have to endeavor harder if you want to make added money at your career activities, so don't let any distraction to cloud your judgment of you could face serious complication in the effort which you expend.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) You have to be more charming with new contacts today if you want to make a project really success in the eyes of those in charge. Tonight will be good for any new endeavours which do materialise in the days ahead.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Have quiet discussions with your loved ones at home so that conditions there can be improved and more harmony will be established, thereby preventing any disagreements in the days ahead, which could be prevented.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Join with fellow associates and close friends so that some practical aims can be achieved. You will discover better methods of communicating with them and thereby squash any difficulties which could develop.

Birthstone of May: Emerald — Citrine



Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti confers with the Saudi economic delegation at the Prime Ministry Monday. Second photo shows Mr. Kabariti in a group photo with the Saudi guests (Petra photos)

AMMAN FINANCIAL MARKET									
HOUSING BANK CENTER - AMMAN - JORDAN									
TELEPHONE: 607171 / 607179									
ORGANIZED MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR MONDAY 27/05/1996									
PART 12 MONTHS	COMPANY'S NAME	P / E	QIV.	NO. OF	NO. OF	VALUE	OFFER	CLOS	CHANGE
TIME				SHARES	OF	TRADED	PRICE	PRICE	
						JD			
250.000	205.000	ARAB BANK	12.3	1.56	13	7485	166173	228.00	224.75
4.890	2.180	JOR. NATIONAL BK.	13.6	3.13	11	7485	33105	5.51	4.49
2.700	2.300	INDUSTRIAL DEV.	5.2	8.03	4	980	2197	2.30	2.31
2.300	4.250	THE HOUSING BK.	11.6	8.12	4	1375	8076	1.87	4.42
3.040	2.600	JOR. KOWATY BANK	20.4	0.00	1	250	702	2.80	2.81
1.510	1.920	JOR. GULF BANK	5.8	7.22	21	39600	37592	9.96	1.87
4.180	3.300	JOR. TELAMIN BANK	19.2	0.00	9	20324	20324	3.96	3.99
4.480	2.080	UNION BK. SAV. INV.	27.8	0.00	3	20613	42226	2.04	2.00
4.200	2.150	THE BUSINESS BK.	9.8	0.00	8	15600	39015	2.15	2.05
4.480	2.300	JOR. INV. TR. BANK	19.3	0.00	3	600	7145	3.55	3.57
3.930	2.420	HEAT. AL-SHALL (BETTER)	1.7	3.35	6	1250	3408	2.78	2.80
1.330	4.10	AMMAN BANK INV.	24.6	0.00	4	938	85563	5.53	5.51
5.850	4.780	ARAB BANKING CO.	0.00	0.00	60	137800	4430	4.75	4.75
1.590	1.070	PARAL. DEV. BK.	0.00	0.00	6	2995	3994	1.20	1.20

BANK SECTOR TOTALS INDEX: 176.56 CHG: -0.15 154 249473 483421

INSURANCE SECTOR TOTALS									
INDEX: 124.68 CHG: 0.00 1 35 82									
1.960	1.130	JOR. ELECTRIC PWR.	11.1	7.50	42	30481	48874	1.60	1.60
2.980	2.430	SHIPPING LINES	10.5	8.05	1	200	496	2.45	2.48
2.750	1.130	NAVY. PORTFOLIO	9	0.00	4	900	1010	1.48	1.45
1.370	1.900	JORDAN INTL. TRAD.	18.9	0.00	1	100	100	1.48	1.45
2.590	1.790	MID. EAST HOTELS	91.3	0.00	1	800	1060	2.12	2.12
3.860	3.090	ARAB INTL. INV. EDUC.	12.5	6.33	8	11100	36966	3.15	3.16
1.250	1.970	JORDAN RAYAT. INV.	32.5	0.00	2	2500	2590	1.00	1.04
1.550	1.980	HEAT. AL-SHALL (BETTER)	0.00	0.00	2	1100	1084	1.99	1.99
2.570	1.870	UNIFICO CO.	11.3	4.72	65	24600	51765	2.06	2.12
1.200	1.820	UNION LAND DEV.	0.00	0.00	20	17650	26888	1.07	1.07

SERVICE SECTOR TOTALS INDEX: 116.54 CHG: +0.27 147 89198 161393

1.530	1.170	ATTACHMENT	9	0.00	1	250	512	1.25	1.26
4.120	2.290	JOR. CEMENT FACT.	20.0	2.66	20	8630	30198	3.48	3.50
2.760	2.900	JOR. PHOSPHATE MINES	33.1	0.00	2	434	1203	3.08	3.08
5.950	4.750	ARAB POWER CO.	3.72	7	7	4281	834	5.37	5.37
11.160	9.900	JOR. PETROL REFINERY	13.6	6.89	22	2674	21300	10.10	10.18
8.950	7.100	JOR. WORTZEL MILLS	9.3	3.45	6	1102	8000	7.35	7.25
5.470	3.650	ARAB PHARM. MANF.	21.2	5.18	21	5000	19319	3.90	3.86
6.480	5.800	JOR. CEMENT IND.	7.9	3.92	2	1050	6609	6.38	6.38
1.600	2.250	JORDAN CABLE	13.0	0.00	3	600	1811	2.25	2.20
8.550	4.710	DAR ALDHA. INV. INV.	15.7	3.48	10	2800	16100	5.80	5.75
6.480	4.760	ARAB ALUM. IND.	7.5	5.39	4	3200	15224	4.76	4.77
7.740	4.450	LIVESTOCK & POULTRY	9	0.00	32	69900	45052	6.64	6.64
1.540	1.420	ARAB PAPER CORP. IND.	8.6	2.15	6	4000	5082	1.76	1.77
1.310	1.840	NATIONAL IND.	10.7	6.98	20	14600	13886	8.85	8.86
2.950	1.060	INTERMED. PETRO. CHEM.	9	0.00	116	56100	54357	1.48	1.48
1.330	1.830	JOR. ROCKWELL IND.	0.00	0.00	9	2750	7101	1.14	1.11
4.250	2.540	NAVY. CHEM. IND.	75.0	0.00	1	100	255	2.94	2.98
5.300	2.650	NATL. CABLE WIRE, MPAC	20.1	0.00	4	600	3993	1.30	1.30
3.940	1.950	JOR. SUEZ CANAL	0.00	0.00	19	5850	6723	1.14	1.14
2.580	1.080	ARAB PHARM. CHEM.	30.0	0.00	44	17030	27026	1.54	1.60
1.820	1.400	KUMHART INVEST.	12.1	0.00	1	50	74	1.94	1.67
3.640	2.380	UNIV. MOON IND.	7.5	7.69	22	7200	12763	2.93	2.60
2.460	1.730	JOR. INDUS. RESOURCES	20.7	0.00	22	8300	13323	1.64	1.65
2.000	1.000	JOR. NEW CABLE CO.	31.8	0.00	48	20950	24768	1.10	1.17
2.610	1.940	EX. RAY ROADWAY	0.00	0.00	1	50	98	1.95	1.95
1.620	1.180	IND. TOBACCO	30.6	0.00	30	41082	53350	1.32	1.30
2.580	1.180	UNION CH. & VEG.	33.7	0.00	1	100	137	1.27	1.27

INDUSTRIAL SECTOR TOTALS INDEX: 116.21 CHG: +0.26 474 275597 427687

GRAND TOTAL INDEX: 147.05 CHG: +0.05 776 814093 1072744

PARALLEL MARKET SHARE PRICE LIST FOR MONDAY 27/05/1996

1.900	1.700	JOR. TRADE FAC.	20.0	0.00	3	2500	1875	7.75	7.75
1.000	1.760	UNION INV. SO.	75.4	0.00	11	7904	1499	6.1	6.1
1.590	1.340	ARAB INV. INVEST.	0.00	0.00	17	13350	13380	6.80	6.80
1.710	1.340	JOR. INDUS. MATCH-VEHIC	0.00	0.00	7	9000	5670	6.83	6.83
1.240	1.330	ARAB FOOD & MKT.	0.00	0.00	21	28600	20632	7.1	7.1
2.000	1.380	NATL. CHELORINE	0.00	0.00	14	29100	40370	1.60	1.60
1.990	1.820	ARAB INTL. INV. IND.	0.00	0.00	3	2000	1102	6.67	6.65
1.270	1.650	NATL. CHELORINE	0.00	0.00	6	7550	5105	6.67	6.65
1.100	1.700	NATL. CHELORINE	0.00	0.00	13	9350	7337	7.9	7.9
1.250	1.800	JORDAN STREET	0.00	0.00	18	19556	19556	6.98	6.98
1.070	1.590	ARAB INVEST. IND.	0.00	0.00	1	300	177	5.9	5.9
1.030	1.670	UNION TOBACCO 75%	0.00	0.00	6	4000	1284	7.70	7.70
1.280	1.300	UNION TOBACCO 75%	0.00	0.00	7	12500	82960	1.24	1.25
1.030	1.680	YAM. CHEMICAL	0.00	0.00	32	74650	19224	7.8	7.8
1.520	1.280	YAM. CHEMICAL	0.00	0.00	11	7120	7179	9.3	9.3
1.030	1.680	YAM. CHEMICAL	0.00	0.00	3	500	470	7.70	7.74
1.030	1.680	YAM. CHEMICAL	0.00	0.00	2	1500	705	7.7	7.72
1.710	1.690	IND. TOBACCO	0.00	0.00	25	90117	63118	7.7	7.7
1.500	1.700	MID. EAST COMPLEX	2.7	0.00	7	3500	2590	7.4	7.4

GRAND TOTAL INDEX: 147.05 CHG: +0.05 776 814093 1072744

Jordan, S. Arabia to set up holding company

AMMAN (Petra) — Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti received at his office Monday a 65-member Saudi Arabian economic delegation headed by the president of the chamber of trade and industry, Abdul Rahman Jureisi, and discussed with him economic relations and joint investments.

Mr. Jureisi said: "There are vast opportunities for economic cooperation between the two countries. The two sides discussed the establishment of a Jordanian-Saudi holding firm to carry out different projects in the two countries."

Mr. Jureisi praised Jordanian expertise and potentials to provide a suitable climate for investments. "We seek an increase in the volume of trade between our two brethren countries, which reached JD 165 million last year, and we welcome an increase of Jordanian products in Saudi markets because they are of good quality and can compete with similar products from other countries," he said.

Mr. Kabariti outlined Jordan's new regulations to enhance investment through the investment promotion law. "The new economic legislation in Jordan would contribute to further attracting capital from abroad," he pointed out.

Mr. Jureisi said the delegation's meeting with the Jordanian businessmen Sunday was a good chance to exchange views on joint projects.

Mr. Kabariti hosted a dinner in honour of all Arab delegations attending the Jordanian industrial exhibition.

DAILY BUSINESS BEAT

A review of news from the Arabic press

Ministry of Supply readies programme to engage private sector in importing rice, sugar

★ AFTER 22 YEARS of being the sole importer of basic foodstuffs, the Ministry of Supply has decided to give the private sector a role in such imports and is expected to announce a decision in this regard over the coming few days after working out a mechanism to that effect with leading importers of food products. According to a senior official at the ministry, Supply Minister Munir Sobar met a number of private sector importers recently and further meetings will be held to arrive at a mechanism for implementing this new approach which must be adopted sooner or later in line with the economic restructuring programme. The official, who preferred anonymity, revealed that the programme which is being carried out since 1989 in consultation with the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, obliges the Ministry of Supply to give up importing and pricing basic foodstuffs by the beginning of 1998 and to hand over this task to the private sector.

"The ministry should have implemented this new policy from the beginning of this year had it not been for the fast (international) price rises on all basic foodstuffs, especially wheat, from early 1996," the official source said, noting that this situation has delayed the general transfer process "for fear that the increase in (world) prices would have an impact on the consumers." He indicated that more than JD 320 million are involved in purchasing basic foodstuffs and delivering it to consumers and that the ministry currently fixes prices of 25 food items as specified in the supply law.

In general terms, the official explained, the mechanism for allowing the private sector to import basic foodstuffs will include only the two items of rice and sugar in the first stage. The ministry will continue to buy the normal amounts of these two products to prevent any monopolisation that may occur from the private sector. The permission to the private sector to import rice and sugar will be accompanied by a decision to stop price fixing for the two products as the ministry will allow their prices to float and to be specified by the private sector. Under this process, the Ministry of Supply will be carrying out two main functions. The first by continuing to import the subsidised amounts of rice and sugar until subsidies are totally cancelled whenever the opportunity arises. This role would ensure that low-income people and those who hold supply cards would continue to receive their needs. The second function for the ministry would be in continuing to import additional amounts of rice and sugar to achieve food security and build a strategic stock to be tapped if monopolies arise or if traders raise prices above real levels. In such cases, the ministry will put large amounts of rice and sugar on the market at the free price it applies to break up any emerging monopolies. The official did not see such a situation happening because by that time, the anti-monopoly law now under finalisation, will be taking effect.

The ministry estimated rice consumption for this year at 85,000 tonnes, of which 90 per cent will be sold at the subsidised price, and the sugar consumption at 181,000 tonnes of which 45 per cent will be sold at the subsidised price.

The ministry has been withdrawing from the market from time to time and whenever the opportunity arises. In 1990, it left the import of fresh meat to the private sector and since then have also quit-dealings in lentils, chickpeas, frozen chicken and olive oil in addition to floating prices of many other food supplies (Al Dustour).

Financial Markets									
in co-operation with Cairo Amman Bank									
Precious Metals									
	USD-Oz	JO-Gm		USD-Oz	JO-Gm				
Gold	591.7	3.50	Silver	5.35	3.750				
Central Bank of Jordan Exchange Rate Bulletin									
Date: 27/5/1996									
Currency	Bid	Offer							
U.S. Dollar	0.7620	0.7610							
Sterling Pound	1.0840	1.0749							
Deutsche Mark	0.3513	0.4007							
Swiss Franc	0.5586	0.5618							
French Franc	0.1355	0.1352							
Japanese Yen	0.0054	0.0050							
Dutch Guilder	0.2698	0.2716							
Swedish Krona	0.0000	0.0000							
Italian Lira	0.0039	0.0056							
Belgian Franc	0.0000	0.0000							
Other Currencies									
Date: 27/5/1996									
Currency	Bid	Offer							
Bahraini Dinar	1.6620	1.6710							
Lebanese Lira	0.04450	0.04505							
Saudi Riyal	0.1670	0.1695							
Kuwaiti Dinar	0.1932	0.1945							
Qatari Riyal	0.2310	0.2320							
Egyptian Pound	0.1100	0.2200							
Omani Riyal	0.1833	0.1841							
UAE Dirham	0.1922	0.1932							
Greek Drachma	0.0773	0.3085							
Cypriot Pound	1.4555	1.5950							

Dow's 100th anniversary stirs memories, hopes

NEW YORK (R) — The Dow Jones industrial average marked its 100th anniversary Sunday, a major milestone for Wall Street that has seen dizzying climbs and crashes and now hopes to enter a golden era.

"It is the oldest and best-known index. No matter how many indices are created, it's the one index written into every stock market lead. When people read the Dow is up, they feel the economy is more expansive," said William Lefevre, a senior market analyst at Ehrekrantz King Nussbaum.

Mr. Lefevre recalled his early professional days. "I started on Wall Street in June 1949. Harry S. Truman was president, the Dow was at 160 and it was the hottest summer in history."

On Wednesday, the Dow closed at a record

Buddy Lazier wins Indy 500

INDIANAPOLIS (R) — After hobbling to his car with the aid of a cane as a result of injuries suffered in a crash two months ago, Buddy Lazier won the both running of the Indianapolis 500 mile race on Sunday.

Lazier, a second-generation driver whose father Bob never had much luck at Indianapolis, nipped fellow American Davy Jones by seven-tenths of a second for his first IndyCar victory.

"It still feels like a dream," said Lazier. "It feels like I'm going to wake up and need to go to the racetrack to get ready to race. It hasn't sunk in. It's not going to sink in for a week or two. You dream about it and feel you have some ability, but you have to have a car like I was given."

Lazier, from Vail, Colorado, drove a Reynard/Ford owned by Ron Hemelgarn, an exercise centre guru. Jones drove a Lola-Mercedes-Ilmor.

Californian Richie Hearn placed third in his Reynard/Ford.

The race was marred by a last-lap three-car accident which took out Italian Monaco resident Alessandro Zampieri. Colombian-born American Roberto Guerrero and Eliso Salazar of Chile. However, Zampieri was fourth. Guerrero fifth and Salazar was sixth in the final standings.

Fifty-four-year-old Danny Ongais, who started last in substitution for Scott Brayton who died in practice, was seventh. Hideshi Matsuda of Japan eighth.

The Rookie-Laden Indy 500 for the first time had a



The 1996 US 500 champion Jimmy Vasser pumps his fist in celebration as he crosses the finish line to win the inaugural running of the

US 500 IndyCar race at Michigan International Speedway, May 26 (Reuters photo)

rival race due to a political split in the sport. Most of the top IndyCar stars were competing in the inaugural U.S. 500 in Brooklyn, Michigan.

Lazier started on the pole of the opening race of the fledgling Indy racing league circuit in Florida, but had problems and finished 17th. His luck was even worse in Arizona last March 24 when he suffered serious back injuries in a crash.

Team manager Lee Kunzman wasn't sure that Lazier would be able to run at Indianapolis but the driver, whose best previous finish in four appearances at Indianapolis was 14th in 1992, came

back strong. He averaged 147.956 mph (238.106 kph) for the 200-lap race after starting in the middle of the second row. Jones started in the middle of the front row.

There were five leaders in the race. Lazier led for 43 of the 200 circuits. Rookie Tony Stewart started on the pole in his Lola/Marand and led the first 31 laps before pitting. Stewart also led laps 42 through 54, but engine problems then sidelined him.

Other lap leaders were Guerrero, Jones and Zampieri. "This is still the greatest race in the world," exulted

Lazier, while admitting he was in severe back pain even during interviews afterward.

"The key moment in the race was the first time I led (on lap 38) and was able to run away from them," he said. "The last 10 laps were as risky as I ever would want it to be. It was all-out. My mechanics said the car in front was the guy you want," referring to Jones, then the leader.

Lazier said he was extra happy to come back from his injuries. His number 91 car was painted a gaudy purple and green. It was the first car with that number ever to win the Indianapolis race.

Drummond spoils day for Lewis

EUGENE, Oregon (R) — Playful Jon Drummond spoiled Carl Lewis's final race before the U.S. Olympic trials with a close 200 metres victory at the Prefontaine Classic Grand Prix meeting on Sunday.

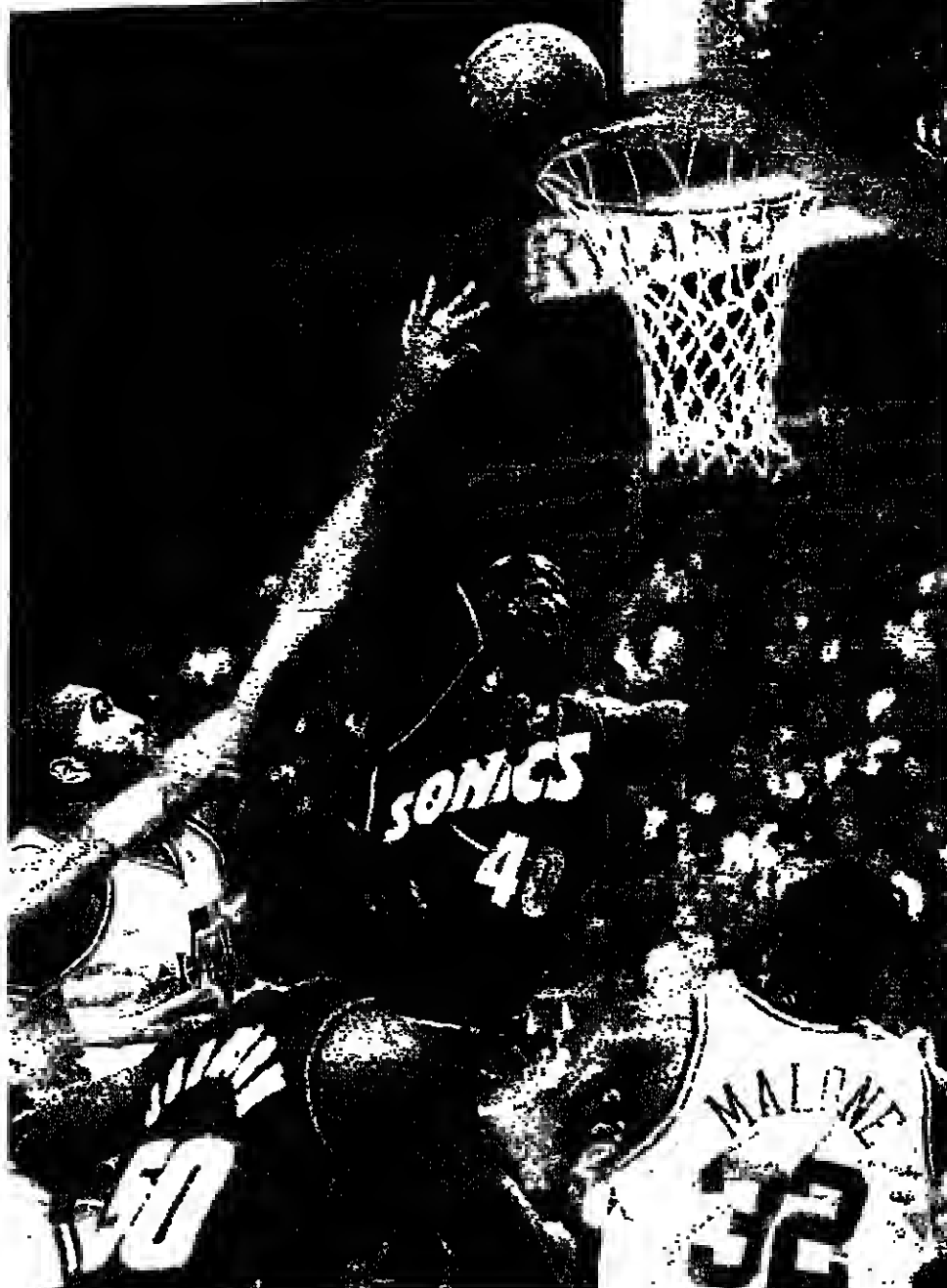
Drummond, as well known for his trackside antics as his speed, clocked a wind-assisted 20.20 seconds on a cool Oregon afternoon to beat the fast-closing Lewis by two-hundredths of a second and end a string of strong showings by Lewis, who said he was bothered by a cold.

"I'm definitely the spoiler to the sport," said Drummond. "Just when you think you're on top, a little guy like me shows up and beats you."

Lewis, who said he stumbled at the start and did not run the second half of the curve aggressively enough, said he would now go home to Houston and train for the U.S. Olympic trials, which begin June 14 in Atlanta.

"One race does not make a season," the eight-times Olympic champion said. "I'm running fine. The least of my worries is one race."

Drummond's surprising victory came after he had finished second to Nigerian Olapade Adeniken in the men's 100 metres with a time of 10.16. Adeniken won the race in 10.13 seconds with world record holder Leroy Burrell, who is coming back from an injury, finishing fifth in 10.26 seconds.



Seattle SuperSonics forward Shawn Kemp (40) slam dunks as he is fouled by Utah Jazz centre Felton Spencer (left) during first half action of their NBA Western Conference finals series game four. Seattle won 88-86 and leads the best-of-seven series 3-1 (Reuters photo)

Sonics squeak by Jazz for 3-1 lead

SALT LAKE CITY (R) — Gary Payton scored 19 points, including a pair of clutch baskets in the final two minutes, to help the Seattle SuperSonics hold on for a narrow 88-86 victory over the Utah Jazz and a commanding 3-1 lead in the Western Conference finals.

Sam Perkins came off the bench to score 20 points and Shawn Kemp, despite foul trouble, scored 18 for Seattle, which moved within one win of its first trip to the NBA finals in 17 years.

The SuperSonics, who blew an eight-point lead in the fourth quarter, can close out the series with a home win Tuesday.

"We stayed together tonight and did what we had to do to win," Payton said. "We concentrated a little more tonight and knocked down our free throws. We had good focus this time and it was nice for us to get a win."

The Sonics' loss in game 3 was their only road defeat in six games of the playoffs so far.

Karl Malone scored 25 points and Jeff Hornacek added 19 for the Jazz, who lost at home in the playoffs for the first time in eight

games and were done in by poor foul shooting. Utah was third in the league in free-throw percentage during the season but made just 11-of-22 from the line.

"If you shoot 50 percent at the free-throw line in a two-point ballgame, it's hard to win," Utah coach Jerry Sloan said. "You'll put yourself in a hole every time."

The Jazz tied the game with an 8-0 run to open the final period and there were four lead changes and two ties before Payton took charge as he has throughout the post-season.

The Seattle point guard sank a corner jumper as the shot clock expired to give the Sonics an 85-82 lead with 1:53 to play. After Malone made a free throw, Payton drove past John Stockton for a swooping layup and an 87-83 bulge with 1:22 left.

Hornacek made a technical foul shot and Antoine Carr scored inside to pull the Jazz within one point with under a minute to go, but Utah wasted two chances to win in the final 20 seconds.

Hornacek's pass went through Malone's hands and was grabbed by Detlef Schrempf, who was fouled and

made one free throw with 12 seconds left.

After a timeout, Stockton dribbled the length of the court and passed to Malone, who was double-teamed. He gave it back to Stockton, whose long three-pointer went off the front of the rim as time expired.

"You just hope it doesn't go in," said Kemp. "You know he can hit big shots like that. We feel good about our chances. This isn't an easy place to come in and win."

Kemp battled foul trouble for the third straight game and fouled out with 1:37 to go. The Sonics overcame 23 turnovers by making 31-of-36 free throws.

Hersey Hawkins scored 12 points and Schrempf added 11 as Seattle shot 49 percent (26-of-53) from the field while tying a playoff record for fewest shots attempted, set last year by Cleveland.

"We win in different ways," Sonics coach George Karl said. "One night it might be free throws. Some nights we shoot threes well. Tonight we were fortunate to get to the line and make them."

Request for proposals for Surface Geophysical Surveying

On behalf of the "Water Quality Improvement and Conservation" Project, Ministry of Water & Irrigation, a U.S contractor invites experienced Surface Geophysical Contracting firms to prepare proposals to provide data collection, and interpretation for an EM37 and refraction seismic survey relative to a Feasibility Study of Artificial Recharge in Jordan.

Offerors are requested to pick up RFP No. Jordan 96-013 documents at room 203, Ministry of Water & Irrigation Building beginning 12:00 O'clock noon, Wednesday May 29, 1996.

Closing date for offers is 12:00 O'clock noon, Sunday June 9, 1996.

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elements

by Salim Bandak



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Jordan Design & Trade Center

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF & TANNIAH HIRSCH ©1995 Future Media Services, Inc.

HANDLE WITH CARE

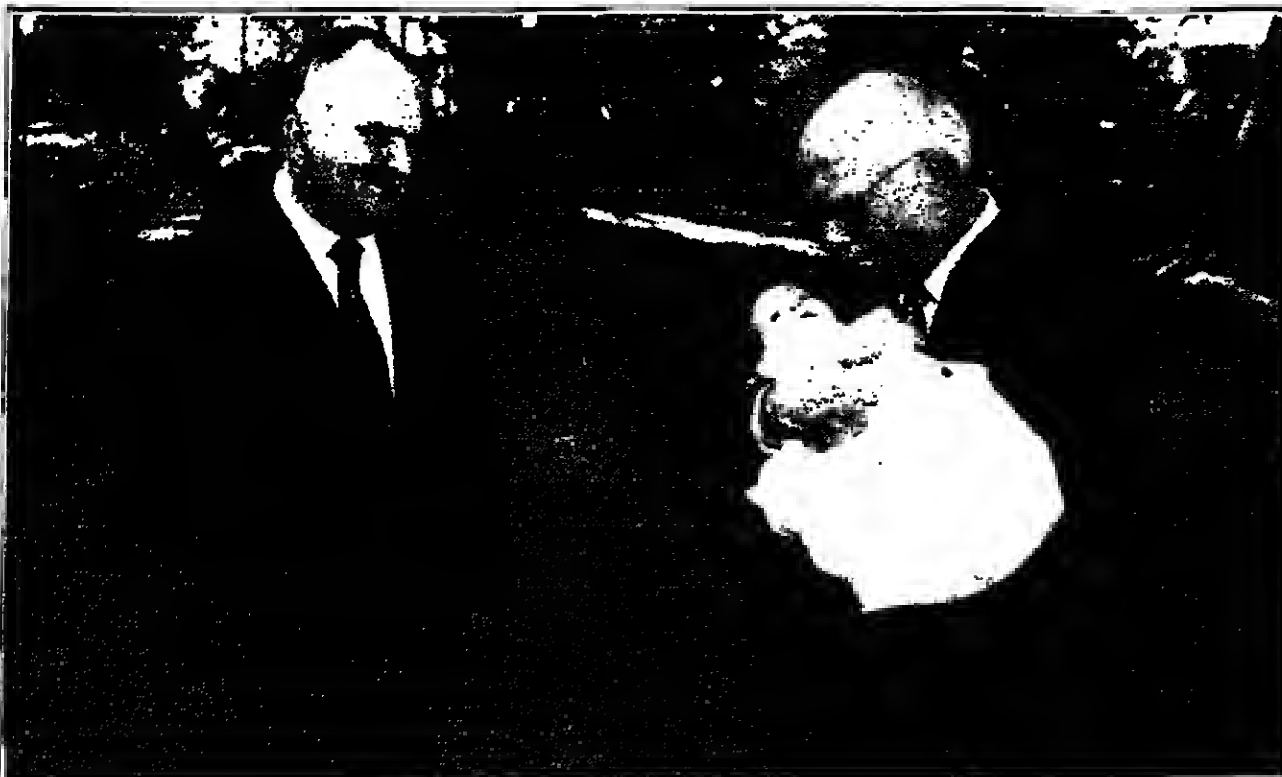
East-West vulnerable South		2NT	Pass	3NT	Pass
deals					
NORTH					
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♦ A Q 4 3					
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WEST					
♠ K J 8 7					
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EAST					
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♥ K J 7 5 3 2					
♦ 10 2					
♣ 7 4					
SOUTH					
♠ A 10 6 5					
♥ 8					
♦ 8 7					
♣ K 8 6 2					
The bidding:					
SOUTH		1♠	2♠	3NT	Pass
WEST		1♠	2♠	3NT	Pass
NORTH		1♠	2♠	3NT	Pass
EAST		1♠	2♠	3NT	Pass

response in a suit higher-ranking than opener's, and an uncomfortable three-trump contract was the result.

West led the king of spades and, when declarer held up the ace, continued with the queen. A second holdup by South forced West to switch, since a spade continuation would concede a second trick in the suit. The nine of hearts was covered by the ten and jack and taken with the ace, and the jack of diamonds was successfully finessed. West emulated declarer by twice holding up the ace of clubs when the jack was led from the table and a low club to the nine provided access to the closed hand.

Declarer used the entry to repeat the diamond finesse, then cashed the ace, discarding the ten of spades from hand. In the hope the suit would break, when it did not, declarer exited with the ten of clubs to West's ace. West could cash the king of diamonds, but was then obliged to put declarer back on play with a spade, and two good clubs gave South a total of nine tricks.

TODAY AT	CINEMA TEL: 634144 PHILADELPHIA Sharon Stone & Robert Deniro..in Casino Shows: 12:15, 3:15, 6:00, 9:00	CINEMA TEL: 699236 PLAZA * Very Hot Day (Arabic) Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30 * Toy Story Show: 5:00	CINEMA TEL: 677420 CONCORD CONCORD "1" * Wild Orchid Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30 CONCORD "2" FUGITIVE Show: 3:30, 6:00, 8:30, 10:30	Amman Theatre & Cinema TEL: 618274, 618295 Watch!!! the new play	Nabil & Hisham's Theatre TEL: 625155 PRESENTS THE SATIRICAL COMEDY Arab Human Rights Starts Monday, May 13 at 8:30 p.m. For reservation please call 625155 - 640155
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NAMING CEREMONY: His Majesty King Hussein holds Ali, the new-born son of Her Royal Highness Princess Sumayya and Naser Juchd and grandson of His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, at a ceremony held at the royal palace on Monday to name the new prince. Her Majesty Queen Noor, Her Royal Highness Princess Sarvath, the parents of the new-born, other royal family members, Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti and Royal Court Chief Awn Khasawneh attended the ceremony (photo by Boghos)

Jordan's oil imports from Iraq and exports under protocol not covered under U.N. deal

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Jordan believes that trade with Iraq will rise as a result of the recently signed oil-for-food agreement between Iraq and the U.N. but the Kingdom's imports of oil and exports of food and medicine to Jordan under an official protocol are not covered by the Iraq-U.N. deal, according to senior officials.

The comments appeared to rule out suggestions that the United States was trying to include Iraq's oil exports to Jordan within the \$2 billion volume of oil exports stipulated within the agreement reached with the U.N. under Security Council Resolution 986.

The comments also came against the backdrop of assertions by Iraqi trade officials that they would give priority to Jordan for imports of food and medicine after the signing of the oil-for-food accord with the U.N.

Adnan Qudsi, president of the Federation of Iraqi Chambers of Commerce and Industry, was quoted as saying in the local media that Iraqi importers would focus more on Jordanian sources

and, as such, be expected a considerable increase in Jordanian exports to Iraq once Iraqi oil starts flowing after arrangements are finalised under the deal reached with the U.N.

"There is no relation between Jordan's trade with Iraq as stipulated in the protocol and Resolution 986," said an official source. "Jordan will continue to adhere to the protocol, which provides for exports of Jordanian products of about \$200 million to Iraq and the continued supply of Iraqi oil to Jordan," added the source.

However, said the source who requested anonymity, this does not mean that Jordanian-Iraqi trade would be limited to the amount stipulated in the protocol.

"We expect deals between Jordanian and Iraqi private sectors to go up in view of the increased purchasing power of Iraq when it starts exports of oil to other countries under the deal reached with the United Nations, but this is not related to the protocol," said the source.

Jordan is likely to get a fair share of increased exports to Iraq, but Iraq, "as any country elsewhere, is free to exer-

cise its options while choosing its sources of supply," said another official.

In the same vein, Jordan is not overly worried that Iraq would switch to ports other than Aqaba for its imports, the officials said, commenting on reports in the Iraqi media, that Baghdad was seeking storage arrangements in Qatar and stepped up cooperation with Turkey to get its imports through Turkish ports in the Mediterranean.

"It is Iraq's right and privilege to choose its own means of transit routes for its imports, whether Qatar, Turkey or any other country," said an official.

Jordan reduced the volume of exports to Iraq in the official protocol to around \$200 million in 1996 from around \$400 million in 1995.

The government said the reason for the reduction was purely economic. It said the Kingdom's foreign exchange reserves were no longer able to sustain the foreign currency requirements for imports destined for Iraq.

According to officials, Iraq's debts to Jordan, accumulated over the years during which Baghdad paid

partially in oil for Jordanian exports, now stand at around \$1.3 billion.

The officials explain that Jordan could not continue to pay from its foreign exchange reserves for imports for the Iraqi market since the Kingdom itself is seeking to meet its own reserves to meet with an International Monetary Fund (IMF) required level.

Furthermore, Jordan also wants itself to be in a position to be able to meet the eventualities of the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) issuing its own currency, leading to demands on the Kingdom's treasury to redeem the Jordanian dinars in circulation in the Palestinian territories.

Despite an obvious strain in political ties, Jordan has said that it would not let economic relations with Iraq suffer and that it would not impede the free flow of food and medicine through its territory to its eastern neighbour.

The government has welcomed the Iraq-U.N. oil-for-food deal as a means to alleviate the suffering of the Iraqi people.

Consulate translator organised baby sale, witness says in court

AMMAN (J.T.) — A translator at the Sri Lankan consulate organised the sale of a baby to a Dutch couple for \$8,000 as part of a "baby-for-sale" scam, an Amman criminal court was told Monday.

A consulate employee from Sri Lanka, identified only as Damini, told the court the consulate's translator Rita organised the deal in the absence of the former honorary consul, Tawfic Abu Khajil who was abroad at the time, the source said, according to AFP.

Rita was the first witness in the trial of three employees at the Sri Lankan consulate, including Mr. Khajil, accused of buying and selling about 35 babies for a total of \$250,000 since 1991.

Giving evidence Sunday, she said a special room had been set aside in the consulate for pregnant Sri Lankan women working in Jordan who wanted to sell their babies.

Rita said the Sri Lankan government was aware of the sale of babies and had several times asked the honorary consul to help give some Sri Lankan babies to Dutch families for adoption. She said the Sri Lankan govern-

ment officially confirmed its requests by fax.

She also said the Dutch government knew and approved of the adoption of Sri Lankan babies by Dutch nationals, noting that all babies were banded to Dutch families for adoption in accordance with official written approval by the Dutch ministry of justice.

All previous adoption cases involving Dutch families, she said, were done legally at the notary public's office in Amman. Only the last case, which was intercepted at the airport, involved the illegal smuggling of a child, she continued, adding that the other Dutch families had papers proving the legal adoption of children.

She said 80 per cent of the money charged by the honorary consul from Dutch families were to cover the expenses of the child's and mother's food and clothing, air tickets fines paid to the Residence and Aliens Department and hospital expenses.

She said a monthly sum of \$100 was usually paid to an infant's mother, and \$300 when she was about to leave

the Kingdom.

The case was blown apart in March when police intercepted the Dutch couple at Amman airport as they were about to fly home with the illegally adopted infant. The baby was placed in an orphanage and the couple later returned to their country.

The consul, a 57-year-old Jordanian businessman who was arrested in mid-March and hospitalised with heart trouble after questioning, pleaded not guilty to the charges last Tuesday. Judicial sources said a Sri Lankan co-defendant, who stands accused of selling her baby, also denied the charges.

A third defendant, the consul's Lebanese secretary, Andrea Alfred Bustani, is being tried in absentia, accused of helping him sell the illegitimate babies. She was fled to Lebanon and a warrant for her arrest has been issued through Interpol.

Mr. Abu Khajil is accused of "trafficking in babies, faking official documents and illegal possessions of firearms." The trial is being held under 1929 Ottoman anti-slavery legislation which carries a penalty of three years in jail.

NATO will not mount specific operations to arrest Karadzic

SARAJEVO (AFP) — The North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) will not mount a specific operation to detain Serb leaders Radovan Karadzic and Ratko Mladic who are wanted by the United Nations for suspected war crimes, a NATO spokesman said Monday.

"We are not going to mount a specific operation to arrest them," NATO spokesman Major Simon Haselock told a briefing here.

A NATO source told AFP Saturday that certain units of NATO troops in Bosnia had Friday received an official notice reminding them of their duties to arrest war crimes suspects if they come into contact with them.

NATO Secretary General Javier Solana said last week that the movement of NATO troops across Bosnia in preparation for September elections was increasing the chances of an arrest.

NATO is reluctant to arrest Mr. Karadzic and Gen. Mladic fearing that it would create casualties and risk endangering the wider peace process.

Questioned by reporters

Monday, Mr. Haselock agreed that the risk of a violent backlash by the Serbs if the Serb leaders were arrested would be as great if they were to be arrested by chance as in a specially mounted commando operation.

NATO officials admit in private to having observed Mr. Karadzic on several occasions since the signing of the Bosnian peace treaty but say it was always in places where they were not able to arrest him without risking injuries to passersby.

NATO knows where Mr. Karadzic lives in the Serb "capital" Pale and also where Gen. Mladic is based, at Han Pijesak, on the road between Sarajevo and Vlasenica.

The United States and its European allies in recent weeks put pressure on the Bosnian Serb leadership to sideline Mr. Karadzic and Gen. Mladic, forcing them to disappear from public view even without receiving a specific assurance that they are renouncing power.

Top civilian official Carl Bildt denies however that this was a deal which would allow the two to "cheat justice and the law."

A top NATO commander in Bosnia was to protest Tuesday at the "unacceptable" encouragement by headline Serb authorities of the stoning of a bus of mainly Muslim women at the weekend, a NATO spokesman said.

The commander of NATO ground troops in Bosnia, British General Sir Michael Walker, was to "raise the issue" of the "orchestrated" violent attack by 250 Serbs on the busload of refugees near Prijedor in northern Bosnia when he visits the town Tuesday, spokesman Haselock said.

Under the Bosnian peace treaty, police are supposed to protect refugees, but on Sunday Serb police based in Prijedor turned back the bus carrying the women refugees and refused to allow them to visit a site near the town, Haselock said.

The women, numbering between 40 and 60, wanted to plant a "peace tree" at Kozarac, the site of a former Serb-run detention camp on the road between Prijedor and Banja Luka, he added.

Egyptian journalists stage protest against law

CAIRO (AFP) — Egyptian journalists held a work stoppage on Monday to protest the one-year anniversary of a law which a human rights group said threatens freedom of the press.

Journalists stopped work for five minutes at noon as a symbolic protest while around 200 of their colleagues held a three-hour rally at their union offices against the law, which imposes harsh prison sentences for libel.

The protesters wore black ribbons and sang protest songs in the union hall hung with banners reading "No to the press assassination law" and "Journalists are in prison while corrupt politicians are free."

The Arab Journalists Union issued a statement underlining "its solidarity with Egyptian journalists against the law and all laws against press freedom."

The government agreed last year to pass a new press law after an unprecedented protest by journalists against the libel law, which imposed prison terms up to 15 years for libel and slander.

The Consultative Council, parliament's upper, non-legislative house, was to finish on Monday its review of a new bill, the government daily Al-Ahram Al-Misri said. But the Centre for Human Rights Legal Aid (CHRLA) said in a statement that amendments to the new bill "are much less than the demands of journalists."

Spanish officials deny report Saudi monarch plans to move to Spain

BAHRAIN (AP) — Spanish embassy officials in Saudi Arabia on Monday denied reports that the aging King Fahd was planning to leave permanently for Spain.

A top embassy official told the Associated Press that the Saudi government had inquired about the possibility of the monarch going to Spain for a rest. But he said the request was clearly for a limited stay.

Time magazine reported Sunday that King Fahd may soon leave for his summer vacation palace in Spain and never come back to Saudi Arabia, completing a gradual transition of authority to his half-brother, Crown Prince Abdullah.

The magazine said the king's entourage had been summoned to the airport three times in the past month for an international trip, only to be called back to the palace.

The report said the delays were caused by close relatives who want to assure their positions in the new government before the king went away.

But the Spanish diplomat said his embassy had not recently received any visa requests from members of the Saudi royal court.

Speculation about the leadership in Saudi Arabia, the world's largest oil exporter and linchpin of Western policy in the Gulf, has been fiercer since King Fahd fell ill in November.

Diplomats say King Fahd suffered a stroke, though the Saudi government has not provided any details of the illness.

King Fahd temporarily handed over the reins of government to Prince Abdullah on Jan. 1, but resumed his official duties Feb. 22.

Time, citing an unidentified diplomat, said King Fahd suffers dementia and sometimes does not know where he is. It also said Prince Abdullah has continued to carry out many of the king's duties.

But the Spanish official, who did not want to be identified further, said the monarch was not as sick as media reports suggested. He said the king still was involved in some decisions.

The official Saudi Press Agency reported that King Fahd spoke to Yemen's President Ali Abdullah Saleh by telephone Sunday to discuss issues between the two countries, which have a long-running border dispute.

Time reported that Saudi officials were searching for a way to transfer official power to Crown Prince Abdullah without making it seem like an abdication, which could produce instability.

The solution, it said, citing two unidentified diplomats, would be to turn a planned summer vacation in Spain into a permanent trip.

Crown Prince Abdullah, who is also in his 70s, has been the heir apparent for years. If he became monarch the transition would most likely proceed smoothly.

8 COLUMN

Vajpayee forgets he is premier

NEW DELHI (R) — Atal Bihari Vajpayee forgot for a moment he was India's prime minister as he opened a debate Monday that could lead to the downfall of his government. Used to years in the opposition, Mr. Vajpayee inadvertently opened discussion on the motion of confidence with the words, "Mr. Prime Minister," prompting an outburst of laughter. Realising his faux pas, a smiling Vajpayee recovered, saying he was paying tribute to the nation's first prime minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, on the anniversary of his death. Mr. Vajpayee could be excused for momentarily forgetting he was prime minister. He has been in office for only 12 days and faces almost certain defeat in the confidence motion. If his government loses, it will be the shortest-lived in Indian history.

U.K. police worried about missing French student

CARDIFF (AFP) — British police said Monday they were increasingly concerned for the welfare of a 17-year-old French student who has gone missing here since Saturday. They said Fanny Paltor was last seen hitchhiking near a nightclub in Cardiff and getting into a white car with five men on board between the ages of 20 and 25. "We are becoming increasingly concerned for her welfare," said detective Chief Inspector Fred Williams. "We are urgently trying to trace the five young men or anyone else who has seen her since early Saturday morning." He said her employers at a hotel in Cardiff alerted authorities to her disappearance after she failed to show up for work Sunday. He said Ms. Paltor, who arrived in Wales about six weeks ago, is from the Charentes region of western France and speaks little English. Her manager at the hotel where she worked said it was unusual for Ms. Paltor to miss work. "She had never missed a day at work before," said Lee Bailey. "It isn't like her just not to turn up."

Cosmonauts end 6-hour spacewalk

MOSCOW (AP) — Two Russian cosmonauts made a nearly six-hour stroll in space Saturday, successfully unfolding a U.S.-made solar battery that will give more energy to their Mir orbiting station, news reports said. It was the third spacewalk for Yuri Onufrienko and Yuri Usachev, dubbed the "two Yuris" by the Russian media, since they blasted off on Feb. 21 for a five-month stay in orbit. On March 23, they were joined by NASA astronaut Shannon Lucid, the first American woman to live on Mir, and only the second American. Since her arrival, the 53-year-old biochemist has been tending to fertilised quail eggs and other scientific experiments. On Saturday, Lucid stayed inside the station, maintaining radio contact with the Russian cosmonauts as they installed the battery on the Kvant module attached to the Mir. The panels of the new solar battery fully unfolded after the space walk, which lasted 5 hours and 43 minutes, the ITAR-TASS and Interfax News Agencies reported, quoting Russian space officials. Lucid's arrival began what NASA hopes will be a permanent U.S. presence in space. Five more Americans are expected to visit the Mir by early 1998. In a separate development Saturday, a Russian communications satellite was successfully launched by a Proton-K booster rocket from the Baikonur Cosmodrome in Kazakhstan.

Police probe attack on judge in Irbid

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Police on Monday were investigating an armed attack carried against an Irbid judge Sunday. Three bullets were fired at Mohammad Shara, a judge at the court of First Instance in Irbid at dawn Sunday. All missed, but the judge suffered bruises.

Judge Shara, who is being treated at Ibn Nafis hospital in Irbid under tight security, was going to a mosque for early prayers when the attack occurred.

"As soon as I heard the first shot I took to the floor. Then I heard two other shots zooming near my ear then I heard a car speeding away," he told the Jordan Times.

He said he was unable to see the attackers because he was shot at from behind.

"Most probably the

assailant/s knew my daily habits and where I pray and decided to take action that morning," he said.

The judge said he was never threatened directly by anyone but some of his family members received death threats in the past.

Asked what he thought was the reason for the attack, Mr. Shara said anything is possible.

"It could be an act of revenge because of a recent ruling. It could be just a passer-by who wanted to frighten me," he said.

According to Judge Shara, police are examining files and records of all the defendants and convicts "who might have taken such action for revenge."

Judge Shara is being treated for low blood pressure and bruises to the chest and is expected to be released from hospital next week.

U.S. to counter 'Iranian threat to Gulf' — general

KUWAIT CITY (Agencies) — The United States is monitoring closely Iran's military activities and is committed to ensuring no one threatens its Gulf Arab allies, the head of the U.S. military said here on Monday.

General John Shalikashvili, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, also said the U.S. will prevent Iraq from using \$2 billion proceeds of limited oil sales for non-humanitarian purposes.

On Iran, he said he was "watching very carefully what is happening in Iran and we are committed to ensuring no one in this region threatens or intimidates our friends or allies."

But it was too early to tell about the "specifics" of the Iranian exercises, Gen. Shalikashvili said during a press conference.

Iran ended two days of major military exercises on Friday involving about 200,000 troops and hundreds

of tanks and aircraft, which sparked alarm on oil markets worried about regional security.

Asked about the U.S. role in monitoring the U.N. oil-for-food deal with Iraq, he said the U.S. forces were in an excellent position to ensure Iraq does not "circumvent the intent" of the deal that is aimed at providing humanitarian assistance to the Iraqi people.

Under the terms of United Nations Security Council Resolution 986, Iraq can sell \$2 billion worth of oil during a six-month period to buy food and medicine.

He added the U.S. had a "firm commitment that 986 in no way lessens the requirements on the part of Iraq to fulfill all the relevant U.N. Security Council resolutions," including providing information on more than 600 people Kuwait says are still missing since the end of the 1991 Gulf war.

to force the Afghan leaders to the negotiation table.

According to Mr. Mestiri, the best hope for success is to take a regional approach to the problem.

Afghanistan, he said, sits smack in the centre of an important region, surrounded by the newly liberated Central Asian republics, Iran and Pakistan — all Muslim countries, all seeking economic development.

And economic development, he said, may be the key to peace in Afghanistan.

For example, Mr. Mestiri said private U.S. firms want to build a gas pipeline from Turkmenistan through Afghanistan to Pakistan. It would mean foreign exchange for Afghanistan, an impoverished country with an economy shattered by war.

Mestiri: U.N. must be tough with Afghans

ISLAMABAD (AP) — The United Nations must get tough with Afghanistan's combatative leaders if it hopes to negotiate a peaceful end to the four-year civil war, outgoing U.N. envoy Mahmoud Mestiri said Monday.

After two years of shuttling between feuding leaders, crisscrossing Afghanistan's inhospitable terrain, the 65-year-old Mestiri is leaving without the peace agreement he tried so hard to get.

The former Tunisian foreign minister resigned last week citing medical reasons, although he refused to elaborate.

Candidly, Mr. Mestiri said his two-year mission accomplished very little.

"I don't think I accomplished much... but to tell them a few truths that they needed to hear: that what

they were doing was not Islamic but was un-Islamic." Looking frail and frustrated, Mr. Mestiri told the Associated Press he was "very depressed" about the prospects of an early peace in Afghanistan.

After 17 years of war, first against Soviet invasion forces, later against the Moscow-backed communist government and finally against each other, peace in Afghanistan has become an elusive dream.

When he arrived in Afghanistan in March 1994, two years after insurgents ousted the communists from power, Mr. Mestiri said warring factional leaders professed their desire for peace. But

Afghans he met said "their leaders did not want peace."

Two years later it looks like the people were right, he

said.

On the eve of his departure, Mr. Mestiri said the U.N.'s approach to Afghanistan has to change. It requires a tougher stand with rebel leaders whose relentless battles for power have ruined the capital, killed 25,000 people and left hundreds of thousands of others homeless.

"Today we have to tell them you have a responsibility, you have a geopolitical responsibility, your friends depend on you as much as you depend on them," he said.

Mr. Mestiri said the U.N. has to invest more time and money in Afghanistan.

"The U.N. has sooner or later to have a larger presence here... this will happen in its own time," he said. But first the U.N. will have